



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JANUARY 2017/VOL 53 NO 1

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

Field Trips

**Nearby Christmas Bird Counts,
December 31 and January 2.
See details on p. 10.**

**Mini Birding Derbies
Saturday, January 7
7:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

Chris Rurik (Email: chrisrurik@gmail.com Phone: 253-225-7104)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet in the parking lot near the lake. Belmar Historic Park is at 800 S Wadsworth Blvd in Lakewood.

From Alameda and Wadsworth go south on Wadsworth, turn west at the light on West Ohio Ave. Drive a short 2 blocks to the parking lot.

Join for some friendly birding competition. At three or four SW Denver hotspots we will split into three random teams (there will be guest leaders), set a time limit, and see who can come up with the most species.

At the next place we'll split into new teams and go at it again! Come for the fun strategy and

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The teal housewives of Monte Vista

by Casey Setash

With single-minded focus, I weave my way through 7-foot tall cattails in search of my quarry. The beeping of the telemetry equipment grows louder and louder until, suddenly, the delicate form of a female Cinnamon Teal erupts from the shadows and flaps erratically away, framed by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

As a graduate student at Colorado State University, I have been tracking Cinnamon Teal as a part of an ongoing, flyway-wide project assessing the duck's population dynamics. This research is currently focused on Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, which boasts one of the highest breeding densities of Cinnamon Teal in the nation.

The primary objective of this project is to develop more accurate and reliable survival estimates for both nesting adults and ducklings. In addition to survival, the bird's nesting success and the effects of large and fine scale habitat factors on these parameters are being studied as well.

This study is being conducted in concert with a large scale pre-season (hunting season, that is) banding operation coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program. It is also addressing important

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Newly hatched Cinnamon Teal fitted with a webtag. June 2015. Casey Setash

Field Trips

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fast-paced birding. It will also be a great way to start off your 2017 year lists.

Bring water, snacks, sun-screen. Scopes will not be allowed. **Register online or contact leader.**

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76 Sunday, January 8 7:45 AM - 1:00 PM

Ira Sanders & Tammy Sanders
(Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

From I-76 take E 88th Ave exit, go west on 88th for 1.6 miles, then turn south at Colorado Blvd.

Turn left again into the parking lot for the South Platte River Greenway Trailhead.

We will start at 88th and Platte parking lot and drive to multiple parking areas along the river. Anticipate up to three miles of walking on paved and trails and adjacent areas.

We should see plenty of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents.

Bring water, hat, sunscreen, snack, binoculars/scope. Come prepared for weather. **Register online or contact leader.**

South Platte Park Tuesday, January 10 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the south end of South Platte Park near C-470.

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TEAL HOUSEWIVES, continued from page 1

wetland management and waterfowl concerns from the San Luis Valley NWR Complex's recently released Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

With the help of funding from Denver Field Ornithologists, I was able to hire two undergraduate field technicians in 2016 to assist with this research. This funding gave them the opportunity to gain valuable skills in the field of wildlife research that will be invaluable on their paths to becoming wildlife biologists.

Cinnamon Teal are an understudied dabbling duck unique to the western Americas. They are the only dabbling duck that breeds in both North and South America, and are a coveted species by hunters and birders alike.

Accurate survival estimates are unavailable because there are no operational monitoring programs to estimate Cinnamon Teal abundance. Historically, data on Cinnamon Teal have often been combined with those on Blue-winged Teal because the hens and molting drakes of the two species are so difficult to differentiate. Therefore, long-term trends and the effects of harvest pressure are poorly known.

It is essential to have a thorough understanding of the factors that drive population growth in any species, but especially one that is harvested on an annual basis.

Nest success has been shown repeatedly to be extremely influential to overall population growth in a variety of duck species (Coluccy et al. 2008, Hoek-

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A technician (Adam Braddock) attempting to get the best vantage point while tracking Cinnamon Teal using radio telemetry. July 2015. Casey Setash



Male Cinnamon Teal captured during banding efforts carried out by the refuge. Male teal start to lose their namesake cinnamon color in late July, making them extremely difficult to differentiate from Blue-winged Teal. August 2015. Casey Setash

How to cancel participation in a field trip

by Karen von Saltza

There is a very simple way to remove your name from a field trip list if you find that you are unable to attend.

On the DFO website, go to FIELD TRIPS on the top header of the home page. Click on Upcoming Field Trips (<http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/UpcomingTrips.aspx>).

At the upper left side, you will see a big blue box that says SHOW/EDIT MY FIELD TRIPS. Click and a popup window will appear with a list of the field trips you are currently registered to attend. On the right hand side of each trip on your list you will find links for EDIT/DELETE. Find the trip you wish to cancel and hit DELETE. You will be asked if this is something you really want to do. Hit OK and your name will be removed from the participant list.

Why is this important? Often our field trips have wait lists. If you remove your name from the trip list, a wait-listed participant will be moved immediately to confirmed status.

Secondly, some groups are very small. If only 2 or 3 participants are signed up for a trip and everyone decides not to attend at the last moment, this leaves a frustrated leader at a meeting spot waiting for no-shows. This actually happened to one of our dedicated field trip leaders not long ago. Common courtesy dictates that a participant who decides not to attend should either cancel participation on the website or contact the leader directly.

A REMINDER: Each DFO member has a personal SHOW/EDIT MY FIELD TRIPS. This guarantees that you will not inadvertently cancel someone else from the trip. So please, use this wonderful technology that is designed for your convenience.

TEAL HOUSEWIVES, *continued from page 2*

man et al. 2002, Koons et al. 2006). Because of this, management efforts are often focused on improving nest success in order to increase overall population size of a given species.

If we can understand whether this trend holds for Cinnamon Teal and which factors affect nest success, we will better understand how to manage the landscape in order to manage Cinnamon Teal populations.

During the first two field seasons in 2015 and 2016, I located 80 Cinnamon Teal nests and captured many of the attending hens, fitting them with radio transmitters to track their movement and survival.

Nest success rates were 14.4% and 16.6% in 2015 and 2016, respectively. While these rates may seem extremely low, they are actually quite representative of most small-bodied dabbling ducks.

All species, but especially small waterfowl that often fall prey to avian and mammalian predators, must make trade-offs in order to maximize their survival and reproduction. They must choose whether to breed early and often

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Field Trips

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From C-470 take the Platte Canyon Rd/South Platte Park exit. From Platte Canyon Rd at Depew Street turn southeast onto the entrance road for South Platte Park.

Continue past a 90 degree left turn and the first parking lot, and meet in the second parking lot.

Late afternoon trip timed to see what gulls show up on South Platte Reservoir, and interesting waterfowl may be present.

We will also check the Platte river corridor area. Dress warm for waiting for gulls. Scopes recommended. **Register online or contact leader.**

Pueblo and Cañon City Areas

Saturday, January 14

7:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com)

Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Division of Parks and Wildlife (DPW) parking lot 2 blocks north of E. 58th Ave on the east side of Broadway: 6060 Broadway, Denver CO 80218.

This will be a **TWO-DAY** birding event. We will bird the Pueblo area Saturday, stay overnight, and then bird the Canon City area Sunday.

Carpool from the Denver area (DPW parking lot) on Saturday morning to Pueblo on I-25.

Bring a sack lunch for Saturday. Bring water, scopes, and sunscreen.

Arrangements for staying in the area Saturday night will be made 2 weeks prior. We will eat dinner together on Saturday evening.

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Field Trips

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We will continue birding in Canon City (probably starting at the McDonald's for breakfast) at 8 a.m. on Sunday. We will have a quick lunch in Canon City.

Birding will be completed by 4 p.m. and then will return to Denver. **Register online or contact leader.**

**Prospect Park
(Wheat Ridge Greenbelt)
Saturday, January 14
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM**

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue. Go one mile west.

Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south). Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

Easy walk along Clear Creek. Good trip for beginners and people using wheelchairs. **Register online or contact leader.**

**South Platte River at West
Florida Avenue
Saturday, January 21
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Bill Wuerthele (Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com Phone: 303-333-2519)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Overland Pond Parking Lot, a small lot just east of the river on West Florida Ave.

The S Platte River here generally stays open in the winter, offering nice, close views of a variety of waterfowl. We will

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CPW, DFO build stronger relationship

New wildlife and habitat roundtable brings together Colorado Parks & Wildlife leadership and non-consumptive user groups

by Chris Rurik

Fellow birders, I'm excited. This announcement has been over a year in the making. I'm proud to introduce you to a new forum for communication between wildlife lovers like us and the agency responsible for their management.

For the last year representatives of fifteen-plus organizations—birders, botanists, herpers, photographers, conservationists, rehabbers, and more—have been building a roundtable structure so that information can flow freely between Colorado Parks & Wildlife and non-consumptive user groups like ours. I've had the honor of representing DFO as a steering committee member.

This is from the recently adopted charter:

"The Roundtable exists to build open communication and a working relationship between CPW and Colorado's non-consumptive wildlife users on issues such as those pertaining to the state's wildlife populations and habitats, as well as non-consumptive use patterns. It is built on the assumption that open, frank, and respectful dialogue is the key to identifying common priorities, finding potential collaborations, cultivating productivity, revealing areas of conflict before lines are drawn in the sand, and ultimately protecting the state's natural heritage."

Why is this exciting? CPW has a mandate to manage the state's natural resources, including wildlife. Often its focus falls on game species such as trout and elk, and a Sportsman's Roundtable with representatives from fishing and hunting groups has been in a close relationship with CPW for years. Exact numbers are hard to collect, but non-consumptive activities like birding are growing in Colorado, and our voices deserve to be heard.

We're already having productive conversations. They're not easy, but everyone's good faith has set a positive tone. I'll give an example. Money is on everyone's mind. Due to a drop in the number of hunters, CPW is strapped

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**Thank you for your contribution to the
Research, Education, and Conservation
Grant Fund: Chris Blakeslee, Judy and
Rick Creswell, Jean and Charlie Curlee,
Anne Esson, Grace and Sonja Hahn, Mary
Keithler, Michael Wilson and Barbara
Nabors, Robert Righter, Jeff Stephenson,
Beverly and Fred Trail, Suzanne and Bill
Wuerthele**

CPW, continued from page 4

for cash. Sportsmen buy licenses and tags, while non-consumptive users don't really pay into the system. Yes, there is a habitat stamp, but it's hard to find and almost impossible to purchase. We have talked about promoting the habitat stamp among our groups or finding another way of supporting CPW, which would give us more of a stake and therefore more of a say in issues affecting the state's wildlife.

Here are examples of issues that have already surfaced: predator removal studies, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat management plans, state parks, and multi-use trails. None have been discussed in depth, as we've spent the year building a structure that will work. Now it's time to recruit more interest groups and begin sharing information in earnest.

How does this affect you as a DFO member? DFO will have a representative on the roundtable to communicate what he/she has learned from CPW back to the membership. Conversely, DFO's representative can carry concerns from the membership straight to CPW's leadership. So if you become aware of an issue, simply work with the DFO representative to begin a dialogue through the roundtable.

To me, a thriving open relationship between non-consumptive users and state managers is a monumental shift in how Colorado might treat its habitats and wildlife—not just as resources to be consumed, but as the foundation for many relationships between people and nature.

Call for 2017 DFO grant applications

by Candice Johnson, Carol Cochran, and Tina Jones

The DFO Research, Education, and Conservation Fund is now accepting applications for grants to encourage the study, appreciation, and preservation of birds and their habitats. Preference will be given to projects in the Denver metropolitan area, the Front Range, the state of Colorado, and the USA, in that order.

Awards typically range from \$500 to \$2000. Recent past grants have included grants to fund student scholarships to local birding camps, support research on McCown's Longspur, Clark's Nutcrackers, and Flammulated Owls.

Proposals should include a description of goals, a methodology, a complete budget including other funding sources, and an indication of any completed preliminary work.

It is expected that successful grantees will provide a report on their project to be published in *The Lark Bunting* newsletter and on the DFO website, or lead a field trip to the research site, or make a presentation at the monthly meeting.

An application form and a history of past grants awarded are available on the website at <http://dfobirds.org/Grants/>.

Deadline for applications is February 1, 2017. Notification of awards will be made soon after this date.

Field Trips

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walk along the Platte River Trail covering less than 2 miles total.

The trail is level but can be icy. Be prepared for cold weather. Bring water or a hot drink and a snack. **Register online or contact leader**

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR
Sunday, January 22
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Rebecca Laroche & Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: RebeccaLLaroche@gmail.com
Phone: 626-318-4435)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

General directions: On I-70 east, take exit 278, turn left onto Quebec St, turn right onto E 60th Ave, turn left onto Trenton St, continue onto Gateway Rd to Visitor Center.

In this prairie and lake environment we hope to see many waterfowl and raptors. Be prepared to carpool because parking is limited at the lakes.

Bison and deer are likely to be seen. We will be walking from site to site around or near Lake Ladora, but will also carpool around the new 10-mile loop.

It may be quite brisk, so be prepared with layers, hand warmers/gloves, hats, and water. **Register online or contact leader.**

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Field Trips

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South Platte Park Tuesday, January 24 7:45 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the south end of South Platte Park near C-470. From C-470 take the Platte Canyon Rd/South Platte Park exit.

From Platte Canyon Rd at Depew Street turn southeast onto the entrance road for South Platte Park. Continue past a 90 degree left turn and the first parking lot, and meet in the second parking lot.

We will begin scoping South Platte Reservoir with a chance for interesting waterbirds, then explore the river corridor of the southern area of South Platte Park, and probably walk south of C470 into the area of Chatfield below the dam, and visit other spots nearby.

Be ready to walk on snowy paths for 1+ mile. Dress for the weather. Bring snacks and drinks. **Register online or contact leader.**

Northeastern Raptor Tour Saturday, January 28 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 N Broadway. Exit I-25 at 58th Ave, go west 2 blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to parking lot on right.

Bring lunch, water, and snacks for a full day of driving and

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Last Month's Program: *Cuba*

Tim Johnson

In a fitting if accidental accompaniment to Fidel Castro's death, the November 28th DFO meeting featured John Drummond, who described an 11-day birding trip to Cuba taken in April 2016. Dr. Drummond has a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry from Southampton University and is co-owner of the Partnership for International Birding, which conducts small-group birding tours throughout the world.

John's personal bird list is over 7,000 species. His talk, "Birding in Cuba," focused on some of the endemic species in Cuba and the West Indies.

Since John's talk consisted mainly of photographs, which should soon appear on the DFO website (<http://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>), I will stray from his narrative.

Cuba is a fascinating place. With over 6,000 species of plants and 450 species of vertebrates, Cuba has the highest species diversity and degree of endemism in the West Indies. More than 50% of its flowering plants and 32% of its vertebrates are unique to the country, including most of the reptiles and amphibians (data from 1982). About 370 bird species are recorded of which 27 are endemic (sources vary).

As John pointed out, the country is still largely rural. Thanks to political isolation, a creaky economy, the collapse of the Soviet Union, which provided much support, and some initiatives by the Castro regime, considerable areas are in fair natural condition. The Castro government on taking power instituted a reforestation program reversing the massive deforestation of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; forests in 1991 covered 18% of the island, up from 14% in 1959 (down from 56% in the nineteenth century). The Cuban National System of Protected Areas includes about 12% of the country, although the degree of protection varies among the 200 or so separate areas.

John's trip started in a fashion illustrative of Cuba's problems. To get into Cuba at all, his trip's purpose had to be classified for "humanitarian purposes," namely to educate Cubans about their environment in collaboration with the Cuban Museum of Natural History.

The group took 24 hours to get to Havana from Cancún, thanks to a delay in getting spare parts for the rust-bucket Soviet-era transport plane that served the route. A repair technician was to accompany the flight in case of trouble. They shared the plane with shipments of refrigerators and tractor tires. In the end, a smaller plane arrived to take them over.

Once in Cuba, with a sigh of relief, they headed to the Zapata Peninsula, a diverse area containing swamps, dry palm-savannah, mangroves, salt marshes, and Cuba's largest national park, the Cienaga de Zapata. The Zapata Swamp is the largest wetland in Cuba and the Caribbean (450 km²) and is the best preserved. About half of the birds recorded in Cuba and most of the Cuban endemics can be found here. The Zapata Wren, Zapata Rail, and Zapata Sparrow are found nowhere else.

John showed good pictures of the critically endangered Zapata Wren, along with endangered Cuban Parakeet and Fernandina's Flicker and many others.

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LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, *continued from page 6*

John's favorite, photographed among the mangroves, was the gorgeous Cuban Tody.

From the Zapata Peninsula the group moved to Cayo Coco via Camaguey (an old, maze-like Spanish city, home to Carlos Finlay who first identified mosquitoes as vectors for yellow fever). Cayo Coco, named for the White Ibis, is still a largely wild area of coastal scrub and some wetlands although tourist development is growing.

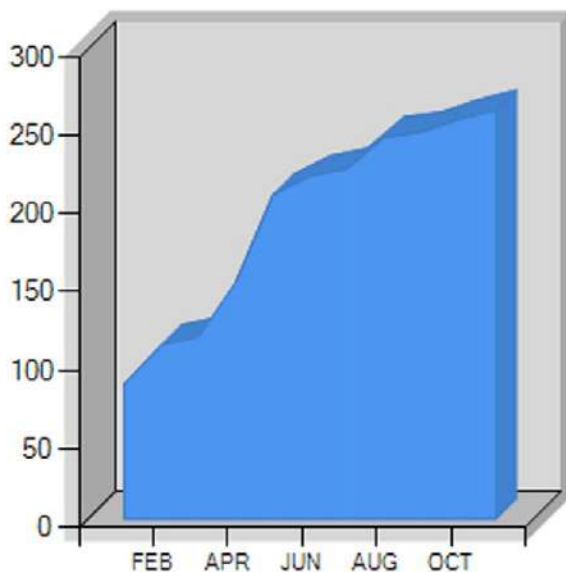
The 17-mile causeway to the mainland created environmental consternation, as it altered the temperature and salinity of the waters between the archipelago of the Jardines del Rey and the mainland. John's group found the critically endangered West Indian Whistling-Duck, and Gundlach's Hawk—which may lose its critically endangered status if confirmed as a Cooper's Hawk subspecies. Other birds recorded were the endangered Oriente Warbler and La Sagra's Flycatcher, and Flamingos, the signal tourist attraction of the area.

The group finished the tour with a trip to La Guira National Park (Cueva de Los Portales) west of Havana, and nearby areas. Che Guevara stayed here in the limestone caves during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. John's group recorded signature birds of the area including the critically endangered Cuban Solitaire and the Scaly-naped Pigeon, which had been John's 7,000th bird species when he saw it on an earlier trip to Tobago.

In an interesting scientific sidelight, the group heard the song of an Olive-capped Warbler and noted that it resembled that of Grace's Warbler—strongly enough that the Olive-capped responded to Grace's recorded song. Further studies of the resemblance are in progress.

Let's hope the incoming administration continues the policy of increased tourism ties with Cuba.

Bird species seen in November 2016 tied!



You have tied the number of bird species seen on DFO field trips at the end of November 2016 with 261 species seen in 2013!

Can you add another one or two in December?! See details at <http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/Reports/Cumulative.aspx>.

Good luck!

Field Trips

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watching raptors in the north-eastern corner of CO.

We will car pool, so plan to stay for the full trip and have a full tank of gas. Bring scopes and two-way radios if you have them. **Register online or contact leader.**

Red Rocks Park Sunday, January 29 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

George Mayfield & Karen Drozda (Email: georgemayfield@gmail.com Phone: 720-289-9395)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Trading Post parking lot at Red Rocks Park. Call for directions if this location is unfamiliar to you.

We will be viewing the Trading Post feeders before the park gets busy and hope for views of **Golden-crowned Sparrow** and possibly rosy-finches if it is snowy.

We will walk around Red Rocks Park looking for typical foothills species. Bring binoculars, snacks, and water.

Up to 2 miles of walking on well-maintained trails. Trails can be icy or muddy.

Additional visit to Bear Creek in Morrison for dippers, time and activity permitting. **Register online or contact leader.**

—Scheduled by
Mary Cay Burger

A big thank you to *Marilyn Rowe*, a long-time DFO member and volunteer at Barr Lake State Park, for donating a collection of bird books, which we used to encourage donations to the grants fund.

63rd Denver Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, December 17, 2016

Count Leader/Compiler: Joey Kellner (303-978-1748), vireo1@comcast.net

Feeder Coordinator: Bob Shade (303-975-2476), wrshade3@gmail.com

Potluck Coordinator: Cheryl Teuton (303-912-3341), Please call her with what dish you can bring.

Compilation (and potluck) meeting: 5 p.m., Chatfield State Park Headquarters (south side of the lake near the Heronry Overlook); **State Parks vehicle entry pass required**. Please carpool if possible. Ask your Area Leader about Compiler's offer for reimbursement.

All are encouraged to participate in the annual Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored the National Audubon Society. To participate, call one of the Area Leaders listed below to assist in a particular area, or call the Count Compiler (contact info above) if you would like to help in an area that still needs additional observers. After a day in the field, all participants are invited to attend the compilation meeting to feast, warm up, chat with other birders, and find out how the count fared. It is a lot of fun. The compilation meeting will be at 5 p.m. (see location above). **Feel free to bring a dish or desert to share!**

Fees: None! So, no excuses! Come have a great time and help count birds! Beginners and experts all welcome!

The 15-mile diameter "count circle" is subdivided into 24 "count areas" each with a leader. Area locations and names and phone numbers of Area Leaders are listed below. Participants should contact Area Leaders for count day meeting times and places.

Area Number and Location	Area Leader	Phone Number
1. Red Rocks Park	Dan Stringer	720-854-5911
2. Lower Bear Creek	Michael Kiessig	303-909-5169
2A. Bear Creek Lake Park	Mark Amershek	303-329-8646
3. Bow Mar/Marston	Chris Rurik	253-225-7104
4A. Lower South Platte - East	Ed Holub	303-979-2194
4B. Lower South Platte - West	Dick Schottler	303-278-8035
5. Highline Ditch	Nancy Crews	303-791-8276
6. Plum Creek	Norm Erthal	303-917-2596
7A. Middle South Platte - West	Charlie Lawrence	303-795-9126
7B. Middle South Platte - East	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
8. Chatfield State Park	Joey Kellner	303-978-1748
9. Upper South Platte *	Jill Holden	720-288-4018
10. Lower Deer Creek (Chatfield Arboretum)	Lynn Willcockson	303-757-7000
11. Upper Deer Creek	Paul Slingsby	303-422-3728
12. Yegge Peak	Ann Bonnell	303-979-6211
13. Doublehead Mountain	Amy Davis	303-549-7759
14. North Turkey Creek	Ed Furlong	303-956-8321
15. Indian Hills	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217
16. Upper Bear Creek	Laura Steadman	843-319-5086
17. Ken Caryl Ranch	Tom Bush	303-919-5040
18. Garrison Gate	Leader needed	
19. Morrison/Willowbrook	Dean Shoup	720-272-9042
20. Willow Creek	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
21. Mount Lindo/Willow Springs	Bob Shade	303-975-2476

* to participate in this area, you must contact the area leader no later than Monday, December 12th.

One area still needs a leader/leader duo – If interested PLEASE contact the Compiler.

Denver Urban Christmas Count

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Count Leader, Hugh Kingery,
303-814-2723

A holiday tradition—everyone welcome: beginners, intermediate, and advanced.

The more eyes we have, the more birds we see. And we like to encourage people to get involved. Start the

New Year with a half day or whole day effort, a good way to start 2017!

The count covers a circle with a 15-mile diameter that includes the Platte River from North City limits to Mississippi, west to Buckley Field, and Rocky Mtn Arsenal.

For better coverage, this year we

divided Aurora into three parts.

Compilation (and pot luck) at 5 p.m., Casey Davenport's (address TBA).

Please call Urling (303-814-2723) so we can count you in on the chili pot, Urling's brownies, Casey's hospitality, and your salad, dessert, veggie, or finger foods.

Area Location	Leader	Phone
South Platte South (to Confluence Park, walking)	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
South Platte Central (Confluence Park to Riverside Cemetery, walking)	Casey Davenport	303-744-0613
South Platte North (walking)	Dick Schottler	303-278-8035
Lower Sand Creek/Commerce City/Montbello (walking)	Mike Serruto	303-377-9870 720-581-2711
Aurora: Buckley Road/First Creek trail/Parkfield Lake Park (walking)	Patrick O'Driscoll patodrisk@gmail.com	303-885-6955
Aurora: Bluff Lake, Star K, south to CCSP (walking)	A. J. Gest offsetaj@comcast.net	303-994-2420
Aurora: Coal Creek Env Ctr/Buckley Field (walking, car)	Keith Hidalgo	720-929-9302
Cherry Creek Res (walking)	Jeff Dawson Jeff.Dawson1831@gmail.com	720-431-3899
Cherry Creek, dam to University Blvd (8.1-mile walk)	Paul Slingsby paslingsby@comcast.net	303-422-3728
SE Denver, N/Hampden (walking)	Mary Keithler mkeithler@gmail.com Harriett Stratton hstra10@comcast.net	303-771-1421 303-941-7009 303-798-9924
Kent School, S/Hampden (walking, car)	Lynn Willcockson	303-757-7000
City Park/Park Hill (car, walking)	Kevin Corwin	720-482-8454
Botanic Gardens, Wash Park, Denver Country Club (car, walking)	Marilyn Rhodes Bob Santangelo	303-674-9895 303-477-1367
Rocky Mtn Arsenal (car, walking)	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
Fairmount, Lowry Field (car, walking)	Ann Bonnell, Tuesday Birders	303-979-6211
Denver Zoo	Brad Parks	Closed

in the hopes of producing offspring before being killed, or whether to forego breeding efforts in order to survive and have the opportunity to try again another year.

Cinnamon Teal are typically associated with the former strategy, leading to relatively frequent but unsuccessful breeding attempts.

In addition to monitoring nests, I have been webtagging ducklings and tracking birds with transmitters to determine duckling survival and recruitment.

The webtags are small metal tags, each with a unique identification number, that are clipped to the webbing of hatching ducklings' feet. These can subsequently be used in mark-recapture studies to estimate duckling survival over time.

I also take morphological measurements and blood samples from each captured bird, which I hope to eventually use to learn about the genetics of the Cinnamon Teal in the San Luis Valley.

This project will continue through the 2017 breeding season, when we will be adding a video surveillance aspect in order to study nest attendance patterns and predation events on Cinnamon Teal.

I look forward to continuing to learn about the patterns that drive Cinnamon Teal survival and abundance in the future, and to better inform waterfowl management practices in Colorado and the rest of the Intermountain West.

All photos were taken by Casey Setash.

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A webtag placed on a Cinnamon Teal during hatch that was subsequently recaptured as an adult. August 2016.

Nearby Christmas Bird Counts

Douglas County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 31, 2016

Nancy Crews, Compiler (302-842-2833, nbcrows46@msn.com)

Birders of all abilities are encouraged to join us for the count. Please call Roxborough State Park Visitor Center at 303-973-3959 to sign up for the count. Please call between the hours of 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Birders will be assigned to a team before count day and the Team leader will call them with the time and place to meet.

There will not be a chili dinner this year, but there will be light refreshments and hot drinks for leaders and participants at the Roxborough State Park Visitor Center between 3:30–4:30 p.m. while we do the compilation of birds.

You may also contact Nancy Crews if you have any questions about the count.

Barr Lake Christmas Bird Count

Monday, January 2, 2017

Alie Mayes, Compiler (303-659-4348 x10, alexandra.mayes@birdconservancy.org)

Tyler Edmondson, Co-compiler (303-659-4348 x15, tyler.edmondson@birdconservancy.org)

Meet at Old Stone House (Bird Conservancy Headquarters) at 7 a.m. to organize for field activity. The headquarters is at the north end of Barr Lake State Park at 14500 Lark Bunting Ln. in Brighton. Coffee, hot cocoa, tea, and donuts will be available as we organize for the count. Participants can register online (preferred) at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count> or contact Alie Mayes.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com
Vice President	Bob Shade	wrshade3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Kristine Haglund	kahaglund1@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Tina Jones (2017)	tjcalliope@hotmail.com
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Chris Rurik (2018)	chrisrurik@gmail.com
Ira Sanders (2017)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Karen von Saltza (2017)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
David Suddjian (2017)	dsuddjian@gmail.com
Lynn Willcockson (2017)	lynnliz2698@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Administration (http://dfobirds.org)	Susan Blansett	admin@dfobirds.org
	Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Kay Niyo	kay@kayniyo.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Kay Niyo, editor, kay@kayniyo.com. Contact Kay Niyo with questions or comments: kay@kayniyo.com, 303-679-6646. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome new members: Brian Blum, Denver; Anne Esson, Vail; Jennifer May, Aurora; Jayne Meades, Denver; Beverly and Fred Trail, Henderson; Julia Wiest, Denver

Upcoming Speakers

Paul Bannick
"Owls" Jan. 23, 2017

Scott Somershoe
"Appalachian Golden
Eagles" Feb. 27, 2017

Dave Leatherman
"Squirrels and Birds"
Mar. 27, 2017

Nathan Pieplow
"Bird Song" Apr. 25, 2017

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

CPW and DFO

Species Challenge

Nearby CBCs



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/FEBRUARY 2017/VOL 53 NO 2

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Allenspark and Lyons Saturday, February 4 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Niña Routh & Mike Serruto
(Email: nrouth@copper.net
Phone: 303-987-8687)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: We plan on car-pooling from both locations so be prepared for riding as well as driving.

At 8 AM early birders meet at the southwest side of the Wagon Road RTD Park-n-Ride, 120th Ave and Huron (less than 0.5 miles west of I-25).

At 8:40 AM other birders can meet us at Lyons Park-n-Ride at Sandstone Park, 555 4th Ave in Lyons.

Join leaders for a trip to Allenspark to look for rosy-finches and other winter residents. Travel to Lyons for lunch. Afterward we will poke around for resident birds in the cemetery or other areas.

Bring two-way radios if you have them. You must call Niña if you are planning to meet in

Continued on page 2

**Renew your DFO
membership now
to stay in the loop
for 2017!**

Visit dfobirds.org or
see the back page
of this newsletter.

Seattle photographer will focus on owls

The DFO program for January 23, 2017 will be presented by Paul Bannick, award-winning photographer from Seattle. In *Owl*, photographer Paul Bannick uses his intimate yet dramatic images to illustrate four different nesting owl species—Northern Pygmy, Burrowing, Great Gray, and Snowy—throughout the course of the year in four distinct habitats.

Each stage in an owl's life is chronicled: courtship, mating, and nesting in spring; fledging and feeding of young in summer; dispersal and learning independence in fall; and, finally, winter's migration. Unusual irruptions and the everyday struggle to survive are also covered.

In addition to the four featured owls, the fifteen other species of North American owls are generously depicted throughout the book. Bannick's startling images reflect their shared behaviors as well as some surprising exceptions and adaptations.

More than just a backdrop, the four featured owl habitats—forest, grassland and steppe, boreal, and Arctic—reveal wildly rich stories of their own.

Owl is a stunning follow-up to Bannick's bestselling title, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, giving bird lovers yet another gorgeous photographic tribute,

Continued on page 6



Owl by Paul Bannick

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Lyons. In addition, if you are not in the RTD district you may be fined unless you pay a parking fee. Please check on the RTD website to see if you are able to park for free or need to pay.

Be prepared for cold, windy, wet weather if it is predicted.

Register online or contact leader.

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76
Saturday, February 4
8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail. From I-76 take E 88th Ave exit, go west on 88th for 1.6 miles, then turn south at Colorado Blvd.

Turn left again into the parking lot for the South Platte River Greenway Trailhead.

We will see plenty of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trail and occasionally in the adjacent mud for up to three miles. **Register online or contact leader.**

Riverside Cemetery/Platte River, Denver County
Sunday, February 5
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Kevin Corwin (Email: kevvgudguy@aol.com Phone: 720-482-8454)

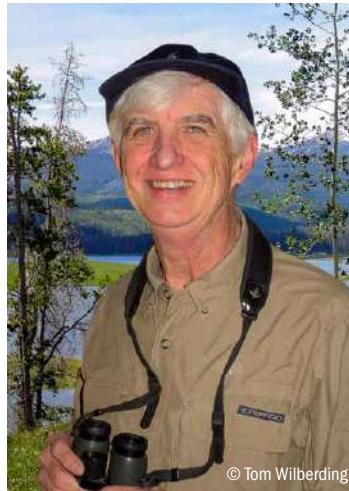
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Entrance is at 5201 Brighton Blvd in Denver. Gates open at 8 a.m. If you arrive before the gate is unlocked, do not park on or near the rail-

Continued on next page

Taxonomy is for the birds!



From the President

Joe Roller

Although I started birding as a kid, early in the last century, and was a busy birder in the 1960s and 1970s, I was not out in the field much during the 1980s, when I was busy with pair formation, nesting, then first and second cycle offspring.

So when I found time for birding again, in the 1990s, I realized that I needed to educate myself about the dreaded “T” word—taxonomy! “Do woodpeckers come before or after flycatchers?” I’d ask myself. If your own answer is “Who cares?” it’s OK to stop reading now.

I hopped on the early part of the learning curve by first studying “non-passerines” vs “passerines.” What a “false dichotomy” I thought. If that makes sense, why is the

taxonomy of sporting equipment not divided into “baseball bats” and “everything that is not a baseball bat?”

As a memory crutch, I devised an alphabet of Colorado’s bird families, from loons through finches, based on the now outmoded taxonomy of that era: A was for loons, cormorants, and pelicans, B was for herons and egrets, C was for ducks and geese, D was for hawks, including falcons, and so on, in taxonomic order, one letter for each family or two or three.

In my own alphabetic system, I lumped gulls and terns and lumped swifts and hummers so I wouldn’t run out of letters of the alphabet.

Fortuitously, G was for gulls, P was for pipits and Phainopepla—how nice! Q was for vireos and warblers, which in those days were close to each other on the avian phylogenetic tree.

S, conveniently, was for sparrows.

The alphabet wound down with U for icterids and V for finches. (For a while I had X for House Sparrows, but gave that up, trying to keep it simple).

I coped with some minor taxonomic rearrangements when the vireos moved away from warblers, and herons and falcons were bumped around by taxonomic discoveries.

Now things have really changed, as ornithologists learn more and more about how birds seem to be related. No longer was A for loons followed by B for herons!

As an exercise I looked at the latest (but surely not final) taxonomic arrangement of bird families and orders (see link below), and here is how my old alphabet went bonkers: C now comes first, for ducks and geese; followed by E for gallinaceous birds, etc, etc.

The newest taxonomy, using my old alphabet is now: C E A H I E F G A B D H I J D (again) K G M L N O P X P (take a breath) V S R Q S T R U.

So there you have it, what I now call the “A C Bs” of modern avian taxonomy.

Continued on page 3

Birding with John James Audubon

Follow John James Audubon on a unique bird watching adventure inside the walls of the Museum. Historic enactor Brian “Fox” Ellis will bring the famous ornithologist to life on a guided tour of Rare Birds Hall in the mornings.

Also hear tales of Audubon’s adventures as he accomplished a first: drawing every bird in North America in the evening programs.

These programs are presented in partnership with [Bird Conservancy of the Rockies](#). Space is limited; reserve your spot today.

Reservations: Registration is required. Please call 303.370.6000, daily, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. for details and ticket prices on the various programs available.

Location: Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Date: January 26 and 27

DFO sees record number of bird species!

Congratulations, DFO birders! You saw 264 bird species in 2016, beating the 2013 record of 261! Good luck in 2017! See details at <http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/Reports/Cumulative.aspx>.

Past Years	
Year	Species
2016	264
2015	260
2014	256
2013	261
2012	223
2011	235
2010	257
2009	118

2016 Change Year			
Month	Species Seen	Cumulative	
JAN	86	86	86
FEB	88	111	+25
MAR	70	116	+5
APR	104	151	+35
MAY	160	207	+56
JUN	127	219	+12
JUL	117	224	+5
AUG	164	244	+20
SEP	118	247	+3
OCT	128	255	+8
NOV	105	261	+6
DEC	81	264	+3

PRESIDENT, continued from page 2

Finally, so I won’t be misunderstood as a taxonomic Luddite, I do admire progress in avian family trees, feeling that advances like DNA analysis, sound recordings, etc., are bringing us closer and closer to “reality” with a better understanding of what the birds have known all along.

Or maybe the birds don’t know and don’t even care. As Garth Spellman put it, “Taxonomy is for the birds! I guarantee they don’t care who their cousins are.” But humans do seem to care, especially graduate students.

So when you buy your next field guide, keep an open mind as you study it closely. Just don’t be surprised if you find hummingbirds before herons, black-birds close to warblers, and waterfowl closely related to “landfowl.”

Joe Roller, Denver. Find me in the phone book under the “Rs.” OOPS! Are there phone books anymore?

The new taxonomic arrangement of Colorado birds is at <http://coloradocountybirding.org/Checklists.aspx>. Then click on “Download Colorado Field Checklist.”

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

road crossing at the cemetery entrance. In the cemetery, we will park on the west side of the office building.

We will wander the paths of the cemetery and check its wetlands and woodlands, then exit the back gate to the river.

We’ll walk along the riverside path to Northside Park and Heron Pond Wildlife Refuge where we’ll check the pond and fields, then retrace our steps back to the cemetery.

Basic restroom facilities are available in a shed on the east side of the office building.

Bring water, snacks, and footwear for dirt or mud paths. Scopes optional. **Register on-line or contact leader.**

Delaney Community Farm

Saturday, February 11

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

A.J. Gest (Email: offsetaj@comcast.net)

Phone: 303-994-2420)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Delaney Community Farm is on the east side of Chambers Road Between Alameda Ave and 1st Ave: 170 East Chambers, Aurora.

Look for the entrance just north of the Delaney Farm sign. Park in the lower parking lot near the corrals.

The combination of old cottonwood trees and dead snags, last years community gardens, mixed grass fields, and Toll Gate Creek provides great habitat for many songbirds: sparrows, early paired Red-tailed Hawks, woodpeckers.

Bring water and a snack. Dress accordingly, there could be muddy areas. Scopes are optional. Portable toilets may be

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

available but not guaranteed. There are public facilities at the Aurora Public Library.

These are easy walking paths but not paved. The estimated distance by foot is 2.5 miles.

Register online or contact leader.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, February 12 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly.

Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Prospect Park (Wheat Ridge Greenbelt) Saturday, February 18 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue. Go one mile west.

Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south). Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

Continued on next page

DFO plans Big Months, then a Big Year

by David Suddjian, Big Month Coordinator

Get ready for a new and fun field endeavor sponsored by DFO! In May and September of 2017 DFO will try its hand at a "Big Month."

Our goals: present a field trip challenge to test our planning and good fortune, visit new places on DFO field trips, attract new birders and field trip participants, see a lot of different kinds of birds, *and* prepare for a Big Year in 2018.

What is a Big Month and how will it work? Most of us are familiar with the idea of a Big Day, when we seek to find as many species as possible in one day. Or a Big Year, when we do the same for a whole year. Normally these efforts are confined to particular geographic areas, such as a county or state.

The future hope for DFO is to try a Big Year with its field trips, but first we will plan and enjoy two Big Months this year to work up to the Big Year. May and September have been chosen as particularly exciting months when bird migration widens the possibilities for variety and unusual discoveries.

We will count all bird species detected during DFO sponsored field trips within the greater Denver Metro Area. The counties included in this focal area are Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Gilpin, Clear Creek, Jefferson, and Douglas.

We will plan field trips designed to visit locations on dates to provide a good chance to find the most species. This will include bread and butter species that are fairly easy to encounter with a basic plan, specialty species that will require a carefully planned effort, and putting ourselves in the path of migration at peak times when we can hope for the unexpected.

A list of likely and otherwise possible species is being prepared, and goals will be set. Then a strategy to outline trip locations and dates will be developed, and leaders will fill in these opportunities.

Some trips will have guest leaders, offering a chance to bird with those who

Continued on page 5

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund: Mark Amershek, Jane Axtell, Paula Barnak, Robert Beck, Tom Behnfield and Debbie Behnfield, Diane Birks, Jill Boice, Renee and Dan Brachear, Karel Buckley, Tom and Mary Cay Burger, Will Burt, Sally Polk and Catherine Carr, Carol Cochran, Kevin Corwin, Jeff Dawson, Jim Esten, Von Fransen, Janet and A.J. Gest, Audrey Gilden, Newell Grant, Merikay Haggerty, Kristine Haglund, Sue Hall, Paula Hansen, Georgia Hart, J.B. Hayes, Holly Heuer, David Hill, Isaac Ho, Jan and Doug Hodous, Roy Hohn, Thomas "Tim" and Candice Johnson, Judy Lane, Karen Clark and Joe Lupfer, Elissa McAlear, Jackie Nelsen, Tracy Pheneger, Richard and Cheri Phillips, Polly Reetz, Karleen Schofield, Micki and Bob Shade, Lori Sharp, Paul Slingsby, Melissa W Smith, Sondra Bland and Bob Spencer, Bob and Nancy Stocker, Jeff Stroup, Sue Summers, John Taylor, Ronald Villiotti, Diane Wagner, Lowell Baumunk and Peggy Wait, Laura and Wayne Wathen, Bea Weaver, Karen and John Weslar, Liz and Lynn Willcockson, Mary Zick

BIG MONTHS, continued from page 4

have key field skills and location knowledge but who may not otherwise lead DFO trips. Then we all get to sign up to work together to meet the challenge and to have fun! Results will be tracked in close to real time on the DFO web page and through posts to COBirds and other media.

We will use the shorter time scale of a month to help develop plans for implementing a year-long effort. But tailoring the approach to a month provides planning challenges that will be less pressing with a whole year to consider. In this way, a Big Month will be extra challenging and exciting.

Watch for more information in the upcoming issues of *The Lark Bunting* as we develop and launch the first Big Month in May. And plan now to join in the fun!

Call for 2017 DFO grant applications

by Candice Johnson, Carol Cochran, and Tina Jones

The DFO Research, Education, and Conservation Fund is now accepting applications for grants to encourage the study, appreciation, and preservation of birds and their habitats. Preference will be given to projects in the Denver metropolitan area, the Front Range, the state of Colorado, and the USA, in that order.

Awards typically range from \$500 to \$2000. Recent past grants have included grants to fund student scholarships to local birding camps, support research on McCown's Longspur, Clark's Nutcrackers, and Flammulated Owls.

Proposals should include a description of goals, a methodology, a complete budget including other funding sources, and an indication of any completed preliminary work.

It is expected that successful grantees will provide a report on their project to be published in *The Lark Bunting* newsletter and on the DFO website, or lead a field trip to the research site, or make a presentation at the monthly meeting.

An application form and a history of past grants awarded are available on the website at <http://dfobirds.org/Grants/>.

Deadline for applications is February 1, 2017. Notification of awards will be made soon after this date.

Welcome to new DFO members: Lisa Backman, Denver; Debbie Behnfield, Lakewood, Diane Birks, Centennial; Margo Breen, Bow-Mar; Sally Polk and Catherine Carr, Denver; Colin Deihl and Dina Clark, Denver; Kim Dufford, Denver; Martha Eubanks, Denver; Lynne Forrester, Littleton; Paula Hansen, Wheat Ridge; Isaac Ho, Parker; Preston and Mary Mack, Houston; Valerie Martino, Denver; Jackie Nelsen, Centennial; Peter Nelson, Littleton; Donna Parker, Denver; Alan Peryam, Denver; Annie Rice-Johnson, Highlands Ranch; Bill Riggs, Littleton; Diane Roberts, Lone Tree; Mike Sullivan, Golden; Ronald Villiotti, Highlands Ranch; Cheryl Wilcox, Morrison; Monica Lenahan and Newton Williams, Westminster

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

This is a trip with easy walking and accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Bring water and a snack; lunch optional.

Good trip for novice birders and new members. **Register online or contact leader.**

Jefferson County Parks

Sunday, February 19

7:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Pratyaydipta Rudra & Sreemala Das Majumder (Email: pratyayr@gmail.com Phone: 919-699-4043)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway, to carpool.

Exit I-25 at 58th Ave. Go west 2 blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to the parking lot on the right.

This is a 3/4th-day trip. We will bird at least two different locations in Jefferson Co. The exact locations will be determined later based on weather condition and recent sightings.

One of locations is expected to be in the foothills and the other is likely to be near a lake.

We will carpool and the drivers will be reimbursed for gas. We will also walk some trails up to 3 miles.

Bring lunch and water. If you have scope or walkie talkies, we would really appreciate them.

Register online or contact leader.

Buckley Road Raptor Ramble

Sunday, February 19

7:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Directions: Meet in parking lot of First Creek at DEN Open Space on 56th Ave just west of Pena Blvd.

Take 56th Ave from west or I-70 to Pena, then north to 56th Ave. Exit left at bottom of ramp, drive under Pena overpasses about 2 blocks west. Parking lot is on right (north).

Level, one-way walk follows Buckley Rd (closed to vehicles, asphalt pavement with some gravel at north end) about 4 miles north to 88th Ave where we will stage vehicles to carpool back at walk's end.

Fence line on left is bird-rich Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR; trees, prairie dog towns on right are First Creek open space.

Look for winter Plains species in grass and on fence, and birds of prey atop utility poles (baldy, red-tailed, ferruginous, rough-legged, harrier, kestrel, prairie falcon, shrike all possible).

Dress for the weather. Bring water and snacks. Scopes helpful for long-distance prairie views into Arsenal and beyond.

Register online or contact leader.

**Genesee Park
(Denver Mountain Parks)
Saturday, February 25
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

Chris Gilbert (Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com Phone: 804-214-1508)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Stegosaurus parking lot just south of I-70, exit 259. Drive under the freeway to the second left turn. The parking lot is at the base of the Hogback, near the Hawk Watch location.

Continued on next page



Paul Bannick

SEATTLE PHOTOGRAPHER, continued from page 1

engaging natural history, and a compelling call to preserve the habitats that sustain these most iconic of birds.

Paul Bannick is an award-winning and widely published wildlife photographer specializing in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat.

He has received the Canon Prize of the International Conservation Photography Awards, as well as first place in the "Birds and Their Habitat" category in Audubon magazine's annual contest.

His new book, *Owl*, is a finalist for the Pacific Northwest Book Award, which chooses the best books from Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. Paul will be selling and autographing his book, *Owl*, at

the meeting. He lives in Seattle; learn more at www.paulbannick.com.

The DFO meeting is at 7:30 p.m. in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium.

Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.



Burrowing Owl. Paul Bannick

Raptor nesting on northeast Colorado's Central Plains Experimental Range

by James F. Dwyer¹, * and Angela M. Dwyer²

¹EDM International, Inc., Fort Collins, CO

²Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Fort Collins, CO

*email: jdwyer@edmlink.com

Introduction

In the 1930s, the U.S. Forest Service established the Central Plains Experimental Range (CPER), headquartered 10 miles northeast of Nunn, CO to research range management strategies, and to evaluate long-term impacts of livestock on grassland communities.

Since then, CPER's research has affected agricultural practices throughout eastern Colorado and beyond, with emphases on developing techniques to ensure long-term sustainability of grazing lands, both for cattle, and for native plants and wildlife of CPER's grassland ecosystem.

In this study, we are quantifying the long-term species density, fidelity, productivity, richness, and success of raptor territories on CPER.

Results

In 2015 and 2016, we monitored the nests of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Great-horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*), Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*) nesting on CPER (Figure 1).

We found relatively consistent density between years: 0.17 nests/km² in 2015 and 0.16 nests/km² in 2016. Regarding fidelity, we found 6 of 12 territories active in both years, but only 4 of these produced young in both years.

Across species, nests produced 8 young in 2015 and 9 in 2016. We found 52% success overall across years and species (Table 1).

Discussion

We documented relatively consistent species density, fidelity, productivity, richness, and success across raptor territories on CPER in 2015 and 2016. Two of the raptor species we monitored, Golden Eagles and Swainson's Hawks, are listed as Tier-1 species of greatest conservation need by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Of these, the Golden Eagle nest we monitored produced 1 nestling annually, surpassing average productivity of Golden Eagles across the western U.S.

Continued on page 8

Table 1. Nest success for active territories (adult attending nest) at the Central Plains Experimental Range in northeast Colorado in 2015 and 2016

Species	2015		2016		Cumulative	
	Active Count	Percent Success	Active Count	Percent Success	Active Count	Percent Success
Golden Eagle	1	100%	1	100%	2	100%
Great-horned Owl	3	33%	1	0%	4	25%
Red-tailed Hawk	2	50%	2	50%	4	50%
Swainson's Hawk	5	60%	6	50%	11	55%
Total	11	55%	10	50%	21	52%

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Weather and trail conditions allowing, we will hit the trails on the North side of I-70 in Genesee Park. I will scout and make the call on which side (North or South of I-70) the week before.

Plan on a 5 mile hike with hopefully lots of mountain birds.

Register online or contact leader.

Banner Lakes SWA (Weld County)

**Sunday, February 26
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Rebecca Laroche & Mary Geder (Email: RebeccaLLaroche@gmail.com Phone: 626-318-4435)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the wildlife area for a half-day trip. Take I-76 east; at the Hudson exit (exit 31), go four miles east on CO 52. The main parking lot is on the left (north) just past CR 53 (Delorme 31 D6).

We will bird both the north and south sides of the area. There are numerous small to medium sized ponds, many ringed with marshes, Russian olives, and junipers.

There is moderate on- and off-trail hiking of about 2 to 3 miles, looking for owls in the surrounding trees.

Scopes would be helpful but not necessary. Potential for a hawk/owl search of the DIA loop in the afternoon. **Register online or contact leader.**

—Scheduled by Chris Owens

(Kochert et al. 2002). In contrast, the Swainson's Hawk territories we monitored produced fewer fledglings than average, 52% across years, compared to typical success rates of around 70% in other studies.

The difference in our findings versus those of other studies may be due to definitions. We documented success of active territories, meaning a territory where a pair of Swainson's Hawks actively attended a nest, but did not necessarily lay eggs.

Other studies often documented use of active nests, meaning nests containing eggs or young. As our research continues, we'll explore this potential difference in baselines, and its influence on conclusions regarding productivity across studies.

Our future research will also

explore relationships between nest success and range management practices on CPER. Though connections seem intuitively likely, our findings of raptor mortality to date suggest otherwise.

We have observed mortality due to nest collapse, apparent predation, vehicle collision, and electrocution on overhead power lines. We have not yet seen any patterns relative to any particular range management practice.

However, as our sample size develops, we will be able to quantitatively evaluate hypotheses in this respect.

Acknowledgements

We thank David Augustine, Justin Derner, Jake Thomas, and Jeff Thomas for their logistical support. We thank Colorado Field Ornithologists and Den-

ver Field Ornithologists for financial support.

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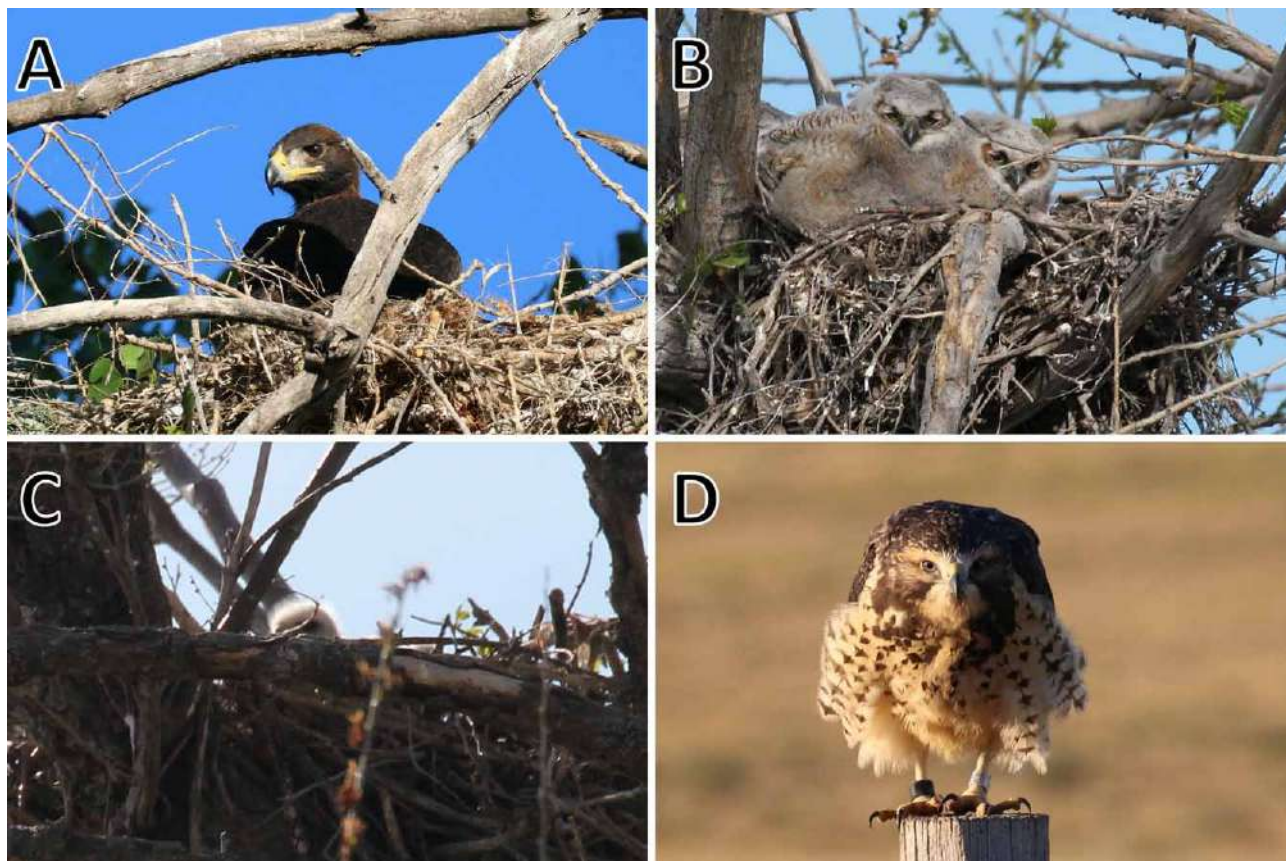


Figure 1. A. Nestling Golden Eagle. B. Nestling Great-horned Owls. C. Nestling Red-tailed Hawk. D. Fledgling Swainson's Hawk

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com
Vice President	Bob Shade	wrshade3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Kristine Haglund	kahaglund1@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Tina Jones (2017)	tjcalliope@hotmail.com
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Chris Rurik (2018)	chrisrurik@gmail.com
Ira Sanders (2017)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Karen von Saltza (2017)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
David Suddjian (2017)	dsuddjian@gmail.com
Lynn Willcockson (2017)	lynnliz2698@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Administration (http://dfobirds.org)	Susan Blansett	admin@dfobirds.org
	Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Kay Niyo	kay@kayniyo.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Kay Niyo, editor, kay@kayniyo.com. Contact Kay Niyo with questions or comments: kay@kayniyo.com, 303-679-6646. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

It's time to renew DFO membership for 2017!

Renew online at <http://dfobirds.org> with your credit card,
or by filling out and mailing the application on the back page.

Upcoming Speakers

Paul Bannick
"Owls" Jan. 23, 2017

Scott Somershoe
"Appalachian Golden
Eagles" Feb. 27, 2017

Dave Leatherman
"Squirrels and Birds"
Mar. 27, 2017

Nathan Pieplow
"Bird Song" Apr. 25, 2017
(New Date)

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

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Big Months then Big Year
Raptor Nesting Research



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MARCH 2017/VOL 53 NO 3

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76 Saturday, March 4 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

From I-76 take E 88th Ave exit, go west on 88th for 1.6 miles, then turn south at Colorado Blvd. Turn left again into the parking lot for the South Platte River Greenway Trailhead.

We expect to see plenty of lingering ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents.

Hike along paved trail and occasionally in the adjacent mud for up to three miles. Scopes optional (usually not necessary).

Bring water and snacks. **Register online or contact leader.**

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Sunday, March 5 7:30 AM - 1:30 PM

George Mayfield & Karen Drozda (Email: georgemayfield@gmail.com
Phone: 720-289-9395)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

General directions: On I-70 east, take exit 278, turn left onto Quebec St, turn right onto E 60th Ave, turn left onto Trenton St, continue onto Gateway Rd to Visitor Center.

Continued on page 2

Appalachia's tree-hugging forest dwellers

The DFO program on Appalachian Golden Eagles will be presented on February 27 by Scott Somershoe, the Land Bird Coordinator in the Migratory Bird Program for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6, based in Lakewood CO since 2015.

In his current position, he works on high priority grassland birds in the Northern Great Plains region. Scott also is co-PI on a Master's project through Montana State University studying nesting Chestnut-collared Longspurs and other priority grassland nesting songbirds in eastern Montana, is leading the development of a tri-national grassland bird conservation plan for four priority grassland birds, and is dabbling in work on Pinyon Jays and Black and Brown-capped Rosy-Finches.

Scott more recently worked as ornithologist for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency in Nashville and led research on eastern Golden Eagles, which are one of those almost mythical birds in the southeast. They are occasionally reported from fall through spring, but rarely relocated and even less frequently photographed. As a result, they are highly sought after by birders!

They are reported from the floodplains of the Mississippi River valley in west Tennessee to the highest elevations of the mountains along the North Carolina state line and everywhere in between, but we had no idea of the number of birds in the state in winter, where they were, what habitats they were using, or really anything about them.

We learned that eastern Golden Eagles behave quite differently than the typical expectation for where one would find Golden Eagles in Colorado and the west.

The Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group initiated a research project to document eastern Golden Eagles wintering in the Appalachian Mountains and across the southeast. In winters 2011–2012 through 2014–2015, we conducted camera trapping surveys across Tennessee, using road kill deer

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Golden Eagle portrait.
Scott Somershoe

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

We'll start off at the Arsenal and bird the first couple hours there. The second part of the trip will be to the First Creek area.

Please bring water, snacks/lunch as we expect this trip to continue past the lunch hour.

In this prairie and lake environment we hope to see many waterfowl, raptors, sparrows.

We'll carpool from the visitor's center into the refuge and then pick up all cars for the drive to First Creek.

Bison and deer are likely to be seen in the refuge. We will take short walks on level trails only. Good for beginning birders.

Bathrooms at Visitor's Center open at 9 AM. **Register online or contact leader.**

Prospect Park (Wheat Ridge Greenbelt)

Saturday, March 11

8:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue. Go one mile west. Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south).

Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This is a trip with easy walking and accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Bring water and a snack; lunch optional.

Good trip for novice birders and new members. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on next page

Taxonomy of a bird club

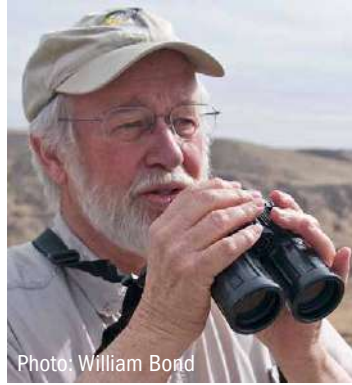


Photo: William Bond

by Chuck Hundertmark, Past President

Shortly after I became president of Denver Field Ornithologists in 2011, a pair of crises put us on a path that led to significant changes in the way DFO operates. Discussion and implementation of those changes produced a good deal of controversy and sometimes frustration.

Most of the consternation arose from the feeling that DFO was a friendly, informal group of people who just wanted to enjoy

birding together. Many of the changes, however, were moving the club toward more formality.

At one board meeting, a member of the board expressed the consternation felt by many, "We're just a bird club!"

Since then, I've often thought about the question, "What is a bird club?"

Carl Linnaeus, whose binomial system for naming organisms laid the foundation for biological science, would say, "That's a classification question."

A bird club might then be a species of the genus "nonprofit," yielding a binomial classification of *Nonprofitus avisclubiae*. Moving up the classification ladder, we find that the genus "nonprofit" is within the family "business." And higher up the ladder, we find that "business" is a form of "organization."

We don't need to look any further into the taxonomy to see where consternation can arise. In 1935, 48 birders (probably called themselves "birdwatchers" then) signed on to form the Colorado Bird Club. In the process, seven of them, who no doubt just wanted to go on more field trips, found themselves serving as officers and directors.

In addition to occasional birding trips, they found themselves drafting articles of incorporation and bylaws, holding meetings, scheduling trips, and performing the other jobs needed to turn a group of people who liked birds into a bird club.

Since that time, dozens of members have evolved from birders into the officers, directors, committee members, schedulers, and trip leaders who support that operation of DFO as a member of the species *Nonprofitus avisclubiae*.

They've provided outstanding leadership that culminated recently in a board planning retreat. The retreat charted a course of promising future growth for the club. The course includes a broader array of birding activities to appeal to a diversity of birding interests. It includes finding where we can impact bird conservation. It includes outreach to engage more people, particularly young people, in birding.

Making that growth happen will require more birders to step up to help sail the course forward. In response to last year's member survey, several of you responded that you would like to help more. Board Member Susan Blansett followed up with those respondents and several have stepped up to volunteer. As you hear more about where DFO is going, think about where you can jump in and help.

APPALACHIAN EAGLES, *continued from page 1*

carcasses as bait to attract eagles. Golden Eagles were detected at 56% of bait sites in middle and east Tennessee. However, we could never get a Golden Eagle on a bait site in west Tennessee, even though this is where you can go to have a decent chance to actually see one!

Some bait sites recorded at least seven different individuals during the camera trapping period in February–March. We also trapped and attached GSM/GPS solar transmitters to 10 Golden Eagles. The results of the camera trap surveys suggest that Golden Eagles are significantly more abundant in the non-breeding season in Tennessee than previously thought.

In addition, tracking seven eagles for one to nearly four full annual cycles has shown that Golden Eagles primarily utilize larger forest blocks, especially wooded ridge and valleys and the higher elevations of the southern Appalachians, and infrequently utilize or fly over fragmented forests, agricultural lands, and/or developed areas except during migration or larger regional movements.

The results of our research, in collaboration with additional camera and GSM/GPS tracking data from other southeastern states, are providing significant information about movements, habitat use, and landscape features used by eastern Golden Eagles in the non-breeding season in the southeastern United States.

Finally, specific migration routes, use of small and large scale landscape features used during migration to breeding sites, primarily in northern Quebec, are providing significant information to inform conservation issues related to potential wind development across eastern North America.

The DFO meeting is at 7:30 p.m. in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.



Scott Somershoe and Golden Eagle.
Ulgonda Kirkpatrick



Juvenile Golden Eagle in flight. Scott
Somershoe

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, March 12

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email:
kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone:
303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie
Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP.

From either park entrance, fol-
low Lake View Rd to the Prairie
Loop that is located at the south
rim of the reservoir. State Parks
pass or day pass required.

Day Light Savings Time
starts today. We will be on the
new clock.

This is a half day of walking
that passes through most of the
important habitats found in the
park over a distance of about 3
miles.

Trails could be slippery or
muddy, so dress accordingly.
Bring water and snacks; lunch is
optional.

Beginning birders are wel-
come. **Register online or con-
tact leader.**

Southwest Metro Area Ponds and Lakes

Tuesday, March 14

7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email:
dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone:
831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at parking
lot for Harriman Lake Park off
South Kipling St. From Hwy 285,
take S Kipling St south and
turn right into the parking lot a
short way south after crossing W
Quincy Ave.

We will visit several lakes
and ponds seeking a variety
of waterbirds. Stops will be
decided the day of the trip, but

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

may include an entrance fee at Chatfield SP.

Scopes will be helpful. Bring liquids and snacks. **Register online or contact leader.**

Westerly Creek Park Thursday, March 16 4:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Chris Rurik (Email: chrisrurik@gmail.com Phone: 253-225-7104)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Park on the east side of Beeler Street between 25th Drive and East 24th Place. From I-70 take Central Park Blvd south.

Turn left on MLK Drive, then right on Beeler Street. This is in the Stapleton neighborhood of Denver.

Come take an evening ramble through Westerly Creek Park, another urban hotspot that has been discovered in the last few years as a place with great birds.

We'll mosey around looking for early migrants (for the past few years it has hosted some of the state's earliest returning Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teal) and residents. Expect a mix of waterfowl and land birds.

Bring binoculars, water, and snacks. Dress for the weather. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chatfield State Park Saturday, March 18 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Edmund J Holub (Email: edmund.holub@gmail.com Phone: 303-979-2194)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at swim beach by entering west entrance of park off S Wadsworth, 1.5

Continued on next page

Last Month's Program: Owls

Tim Johnson

The first DFO program for 2017, on January 23, featured Paul Bannick, well-known wildlife photographer based in Seattle. His highly polished talk "Owl: A Year in the Life of North American Owls" abstracted his recent book of the same name, published last October.

Paul, a graduate of the University of Washington, currently has a day job as Major Gifts Director at Conservation Northwest, but spends a third of his year in the field. He accompanied his presentation not just with stunning photography, but with an appropriately Strigiform sound track.

As his book's title suggests, Paul's talk recounted the seasonal cycle as owls see it, focusing on Snowy, Great Grey (Grey Ghost), Burrowing, and Northern Pygmy Owls, but with samples of many other species interspersed.

In his introduction, Paul defined the book's purpose as demystifying owls, but with a larger purpose of encouraging learning about habitats. He cited his publisher (Braided River) as devoted to this endeavor, and its website is indeed worth a visit.

A repeated theme of the presentation was that what we humans loosely call a habitat, e.g., "short-grass prairie." Habitat is perceived by its inhabitants as a collection of many environments with different useful properties, some wildly diverse. This is not a new idea, of course, but Paul pointed out that careful study of animal behavior, in his case owl behavior, can highlight subtle but important environmental features that can confer survival value.

I did not know, for example, that vertical thermal gradients in old-growth forests influenced Northern Spotted Owl nesting behavior; nor that low-relief irregular ground in the Arctic due to freeze/thaw cycles allowed early dispersal of Snowy Owl fledglings.

The main sections of the presentation concerned mating strategies (Spring); prey capture (year-round, but very intense during nesting season in Spring and Summer); and interactions with nestlings and fledglings.

I can only give a biased taste of the torrent of facts supported by photographs or videos that Paul presented. Snowy Owl males, for example, have an arduous life. They hang around their tundra hummocks (selected for prey abundance), for 6–9 months, while the females have no territorial affinity. Females evaluate males based on their ability to provide a steady stream of

Continued on page 5

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education, and Conservation Fund: Nathaniel and Julia Auckland, Mark Peyton and Susan Blansett, Bonnie Boex, Jeff and Diane Carter, Cris Cook, Edward T Donnan, Dave and Mary Driscoll, John and Peggy Gonder, Carol and Fran Haas, Yes and David Hennes, Marjorie Jannotta and Chuck Hundertmark, Ellie Jones, Rebecca Laroche, Rex McGehee, Tracy Rackauskas, Kathleen Stewart, Bobbi Vollmer, Charlene and Bruce Warneke, Jeremy Winick

Invitation to potential DFO trip leaders

by Karen von Saltza

The DFO Field Trip Committee invites any interested potential Field Trip Leaders to join us for a certification workshop Saturday, February 25, 2017 at Saint Anthony's Hospital Board Room.

The hours are 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information or to request an invitation, please contact kvonsaltza@yahoo.com or 303-941-4881.

New year, new bird tally

We start a new year with 74 species seen by DFO trip participants in January compared to 86 in January 2016! Join the fun in preparation for the Big Month in May! <http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/Reports/Cumulative.aspx>

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, *continued from page 4*

rodent prey, which isn't entirely under the male's control. (Paul presented dramatic pictures here of Snowy Owls doing flight displays with dead lemmings!)

Paul said that the pure white plumage of male Snowy Owls was an evolutionary advertising scheme to make them visible for miles around. In boom rodent years the owls can produce up to 12 young, with hatching and fledging spaced out (and fledgling dispersed as described), but nesting and egg production are closely tied to prey abundance. Owlets are preyed upon by jaegers.

Another highlight for me was Paul's discussion of predation strategies. He described the function of some owl species' facial disc in focusing sound and emphasized that it is a dynamic structure, not just an antenna

He talked about and illustrated different hunting strategies (my capsule descriptions): (1) sit-and-wait, used by the Boreal Owl; (2) cruise-and-dive, used by Short-eared Owls, which have the lowest wing loading of any owl, enabling extreme aerial maneuvers; (3) hover-and-crash, employed by the Northern Hawk Owl, which hunts by eye; (4) swoop-and-punch, used by Great Grey Owls, who can plunge their talons through turf and snow to capture prey located by sound.

Then (5) there is the Northern Pygmy-Owl, a visual hunter that can catch prey bigger than itself, on average bigger than Great Grey Owls' prey. Paul showed photos of this owl dragging a live bat into its nest cavity. I empathized with the bat; I felt the same on November 9th.

Throughout the talk Paul emphasized the importance of public lands in preserving habitat for owls. The profits from his book will support owl research and habitat. I hope the book enjoys a real success.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

miles south of C-470. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Bring water, snacks, scope if you have one. Dress for the weather Looking for waterfowl, raptors, resident birds. **Register online or contact leader.**

Golden Gate Canyon State Park Sunday, March 19

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Chris Goulart (Email: cgoulart001@comcast.net
Phone: 586-764-2126)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Park-n-Ride on west side of Ward Road, just north of I-70. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Late winter romp in the mountains. We will walk several trails (as available) and look for what late winter or early spring birds may be active. Three-toed Woodpeckers, Mountain Bluebirds, and more.

Winter time in the mountains can be slow or magical. **Register online or contact leader.**

Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso County)

Friday, March 24

7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Paul Slingsby (Email: paslingsby@comcast.net Phone: 303-422-3728)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Carpool at 7:00 a.m. from Castle Rock King Soopers parking lot (NW corner of lot), 100 Founders Parkway (I-25 Exit 184).

OR meet at 8:30 a.m. at Fountain Creek Nature Center, 320 Pepper Grass Lane, Fountain CO 80817.

Take Exit 132A from I-25, go

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Field Trips

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east on Hwy 16 for 0.5 mile and south on Hwy 87 for 0.5 mile to Pepper Grass Lane.

This is a full-day trip to search for ducks, raptors, and a variety of songbirds that can be unique to this park. We will walk about 3 miles.

We enjoy interactive and participatory trips for birders of all levels. Wear layers and bring water and lunch. We may also visit Big Johnson Reservoir. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chatfield State Park - Marina sandpit
Saturday, March 25
7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From the south entrance of Chatfield meet at the first parking lot which is just south east of the marina.

We will bird several locations in NW Douglas County. Good trip to build up your Douglas Co. list.

We will also use the Sibley apps compare feature to further study the differences between similar species. Sibley's is the only smartphone field guide to offer this excellent feature. Fine tune your species ID with this great field guide. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on next page

2016 Denver CBC highlights

by Joey Kellner, Compiler

The 2016 Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place on December 17th. This is the 63rd consecutive year that the Denver Field Ornithologists has conducted a Christmas Count within the same 15-mile diameter count circle established in 1954 and centered just north of the old Ken Caryl Ranch entrance.

The weather on count day started overcast with 8+ inches of new snow that fell the prior night. Morning temperatures started at -5F, but thankfully no wind to light winds.

It was a COLD day to be out with the team reporting a respectable 36,475 individual birds of **112 species recorded** by 92 field observers and 9 feeder watchers. Unfortunately, three Count Areas were not able to be covered due to the weather.

AMAZINGLY with only two-thirds of the observers and the bad weather we were only one species shy of the record high count of 113 species seen in 1977!

One new species was added to the cumulative Denver CBC list in 2016, Grasshopper Sparrow. The grand total of species seen since 1954 thus increased to 201! See the summary at <http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/CBC.aspx>.

The Chatfield Reservoir (Area 8) group found an afternoon **Grasshopper Sparrow** along the main park road (one of the only bare ground areas around). A first ever for the Denver CBC! Very good photos were taken and shared at the compilation meeting.

Other "Rare" birds (seen on less than 10% of the previous counts) and found this year included

- Black Scoter (only the 3rd time recorded on the Denver CBC) found in Area 4B (Lower South Platte-West) on South Platte Park Reservoir;
- Dunlin (only the 2nd time recorded on the Denver CBC) found in Area 4A (Lower South Platte-East) on McClellan Reservoir;
- Northern Saw-whet Owl (7th time recorded on the count) found on count day in Area 17 (Ken Caryl Ranch).

"Uncommon" birds (seen 10–24% of the previous counts) found this year included

- Ross's Goose (found in Area 3),
- Cackling Goose (multiple areas—split and tracked starting in 2004),
- Long-tailed Duck (found in Area 4B),
- Eurasian Collared-Dove (multiple areas—recent explosive addition to the annual count),
- Say's Phoebe (Area 8),
- Clark's Nutcracker (Area 17),
- Brown Thrasher (Area 7A),
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's race) (Area 8),
- Lapland Longspur (Area 7B),
- Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (Area 13), and
- Lesser Goldfinch (several individuals found in two count areas and at feeder watchers' homes).

Continued on page 7



Grasshopper Sparrow, Chatfield SP, CO, 17 December 2016. *Joey Kellner*

CBC HIGHLIGHTS, continued from page 6

Record-high individual numbers were established for three species this year: Cackling Goose (5,820), Grasshopper Sparrow (1), and Lesser Goldfinch (23).

The ten most numerous species observed on the 2016 count were (1) Canada Goose (12,360), (2) Cackling Goose (5,820), (3) Dark-eyed Junco (1,804), (4) Mallard (1,686), (5) Ring-billed Gull (1,404), (6) American Robin (1,019), (7) Common Merganser (887), (8) American Crow (828), (9) House Finch (775), (10) European Starling (603). Together, these ten species accounted for 74.3% of the birds counted.

Two additional “Count Week” species were noted in the three days on either side of count day: Eastern Phoebe found along the South Platte River and Hermit Thrush found in Area 4A. **Making an overall count of 114 species for the circle this year!**

As compiler of the 63rd Denver Christmas Bird Count, I thank all of the field observers and feeder watchers for participating. Special thanks go to the Area Leaders whose efforts and knowledge make this count a success and to Cheryl Teuton and Dan Brooke who did an amazing job once again of coordinating this year’s potluck.

Thank you Bob Shade for contacting, coordinating, and compiling all the Feeder Watcher data. Thanks also to Colorado Parks and Wildlife for the use of the Chatfield State Park Multi-purpose Room for our compilation meeting.

Lastly, thanks to all who brought drinks and food to share! Sharing food and friendship after a day in the field was a great way to relax before the holidays. I hope to see you all at the compilation next year!

See 2016 Denver CBC report on next page

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, March 26

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mary Keithler (Email: mkeithler@yahoo.com Phone: 303-771-1421)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at WEST entrance of Park. Go east from Yosemite St on Union Ave past Cherry Creek High School to west entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods.

We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1–2 miles. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and bug repellent. Scopes are useful. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chatfield State Park

Tuesday, March 28

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet for carpooling at the intersection of S Wadsworth and Deer Creek Rd. Park on the north side of Deer Creek Rd which is just south of C-470. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Explore the park and perhaps other nearby locations for early migrants, waterfowl, resident birds, and any raptors zooming by. Bring lunch, water, and scopes. **Register online or contact leader.**

—Scheduled by Bill Wuerthele

63rd Annual Denver Christmas Bird Count

Day, Date, and Time: Saturday, December 17, 2016, 7:00 a.m. to 4:40 p.m.

Compiler: Joey Kellner **Feeder Coordinator:** Bob Shade

Weather: AM overcast w/light snow, PM mostly clear **Temperature:** -10 to 15°F **Wind:** variable, 0 to 10 mph

Snow Cover: 3 to 13"

Still Water: Frozen to partly open

Moving Water: Frozen to partly open

Observers: 101 (92 in 33 parties, 9 watchers at 9 feeders)

Total Party Hours: 185.7 (113.5 on foot, 64.05 by car, 10.15 feeder watching)

Total Party Miles: 500.8 (85.05 on foot, 415.7 by car)

Hours Spent Watching Feeders: 10.15

Count Day Totals: 112 species; 36,561 individuals

Participants by Area (Area Leader's names in **bold**):

1. Red Rocks Park (RRP): **Dan Stringer**
2. Lower Bear Creek (LBC): Rick Creswell, David Gillilan, **Michael Kiessig**, George Mayfield, Christy Payne
- 2A. Bear Creek Lake Park (BCP): **Mark Amershek**, Mary Geder, A.J. Gest
3. Bow Mar/Marston (BMM): Tina Jones, Taylor Long, Joe Roller, **Chris Rurik**, Scott Somershoe
- 4A. Lower South Platte-east (LSP): Nelson Ford, **Ed Holub**, Thomas Holub
- 4B. Lower South Platte-west (LSP): Dave Mellblom (+23 helpers), **Dick Schottler**, Christopher Warneke
5. Highline Ditch (HLD): **Nancy Crews**, Susan Dunn, Pam Schmidt
6. Plum Creek (PCK): Dan Brooke, Jesse Casias, Renee Casias, **Norm Erthal**, Cheryl Teuton
- 7A. Middle South Platte (MSP): Joey Angstman, **Charles Lawrence**
- 7B. Middle South Platte (MSP): **Hugh Kingery**, **Urling Kingery**, Paul Petzke, Mike Serruto, Celia Greenman
8. Chatfield Reservoir (CHA): Chris Gilbert, **Joey Kellner**, Andy Knolla, Bob Spencer, Ali Warren
9. Upper South Platte (USP): Lynn Forrester, Betty Glass, **Jill Holden**, Mary Keithler, Meredith McBurney
10. Lower Deer Creek (LDC): **Not covered due to weather. ****
11. Upper Deer Creek (UDC): Karen Drozda, **Paul Slingsby**
12. Yegge Peak (YPK): **Ann Bonnell**, **Audrey Boag**
13. Doublehead Mountain (DHM): **Amy Davis**, Nancy Davis, Tim Davis
14. North Turkey Creek (NTC): **Ed Furlong**
15. Indian Hills (IHL): Chuck Aid, Caroline Gilbert, Michael Gilbert, Elaine Lockey, **Dick Prickett**, Rob Raker, Bobby Strom, Jeanette Strom
16. Upper Bear Creek (UBC): Melissa Mezger, **Laura Steadman**
17. Ken Caryl Ranch (KCR): **Tom Bush**, Debra Fulton, Ruth Gabreski, David Suddjian, Bea Weaver
18. Garrison Gate (GGT): Area not covered this year.
19. Morrison/Willow Brook (MWB): Eric Knoshaug, **Jessica Knoshaug**
20. Willow Creek (WCK): **Not covered due to weather. ****
21. Mt. Lindo/Willow Springs (MLW): **Bob Shade**

**** Christmas Bird Counts must be performed on a single calendar day. Any species seen outside that date can be added as "Count Week" if the sighting falls within three days prior or after the count date.**

Renew now to keep your newsletter coming!

Dues deadline looming! After March 1, we will no longer send out *The Lark Bunting* to those who have not paid their 2017 dues. Please renew at <http://dfobirds.org/DFO/Membership.aspx> where you can pay your dues through PayPal or by check and review your contact information.

If you prefer, go to <http://dfobirds.org/LarkBunting/LB.pdf> and print the last page and mail with your check.

Do you know your vireo and nuthatch subspecies?

by Garth Spellman and
Chuck Hundertmark

This spring and summer, you can put your skills at identifying subspecies of Warbling Vireo and White-breasted Nuthatch to the test. At the same time, you'll be contributing to evolutionary biology.

Not so sure about subspecies identification? No problem; help is on the way.

Denver Field Ornithologists will partner this spring with Garth Spellman, Curator of Ornithology at Denver Museum of Nature and Science, to see if we can learn something about what's going on with the eastern and western subspecies of Warbling Vireo and eastern and interior west subspecies of White-breasted Nuthatch.

Both the Warbling Vireo and White-breasted Nuthatch are candidates for splitting into two or more species.

Taxonomists will make their decision in part based on what happens in places where the subspecies are in contact during the breeding season.

When eastern Warbling Vireos meet interior western Warbling Vireos, do they shun each other, or hook up?

Spellman is working on a program to help us learn the skills we'll need to participate in the research project.

For the vireos, visual cues may be the easiest identifiers. For the nuthatches, recognizing the call differences between the subspecies will be the key, though audio and visual cues are useful for both species.

The other information needed from the field will be the location where an observation is made. A smartphone app should be sufficient

for capturing that information.

The program will be mounted on the DFO website so any member can download it. In addition, Garth will lead a workshop for DFO trip leaders in March to help them integrate data gathering into the DFO field trips they lead.

The research will focus on the same Front Range counties that will be included in the May Big Month. However, observations from anywhere in Eastern Colorado will contribute to the project.

While we hope field trip leaders will make these species a target on their field trips, any member can contribute data on their personal trips as well as DFO trips.

We'll be getting out more infor-

mation about this project, in the next month.

Meanwhile, you can get a picture of what we already know about the Eastern Colorado situation with these subspecies by reading the Warbling Vireo and White-breasted Nuthatch accounts in *The Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas* <http://cobreedingbirdatlasii.org/index.html>.

You can get the visual picture by going to eBird and checking species maps under the "Explore Data" link.

When you enter "Warbling Vireo" for species name, you'll get the option of searching for the Eastern or Western subspecies. For White-breasted Nuthatch, you can choose Eastern or Interior West.



First state record if accepted of a Purple Sandpiper at Dillon Reservoir, Summit Co., CO. 18 December 2016. Photographed by Ira Sanders

Help monitor owls along the Cache la Poudre River

Help monitor and collect data on Eastern Screech-Owls and other owl species living along the Cache la Poudre River in Fort Collins in March to mid-May.

Data helps guide habitat restora-

tion efforts along the river. Those interested in owls willing to conduct surveys at night, will follow a set protocol, drive to monitoring sites, and walk to river.

Training is in March. Contact Rob

Sparks to be added to a reminder list!

For more information: Rob Sparks, Research Biologist at 970-482-1707 x19 or rob.sparks@birdconservancy.org.

Generous contribution may help lure rosy-finches

A huge thank you with applause to Scott Menough and all at the Lakewood/South Wadsworth Wild Birds Unlimited for their annual and generous donation of sunflower chips to the Fawnbrook Inn in our hopes of rosy-finch visitations!

Olympic Birdfest coming up in April

Several DFO members suggested in the recent member survey that we provide information about special birding festivals around the nation.

They probably were remembering the suggestions we published in earlier volumes. See page 10 at <http://tinyurl.com/jpe8och>.

Here is one festival to consider.

SAVE THE DATE: Olympic Birdfest, April 7-9, 2017. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction & raffle, gala banquet, and more.

The featured speaker: noted nature photographer Bonnie Block.

Join the festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 4-6, 2017.

Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon. Extend your festival with the Neah Bay post-trip on April 9-11, 2017: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington.

BirdFest registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org.



Olympic Peninsula April 7-9, 2017
BirdFest
Come bird with us!

- ❑ San Juan Island Cruise
- ❑ Neah Bay Birding Excursion
- ❑ Guided Birding Trips
- ❑ Bird Drawing Class
- ❑ Photography Workshop
- ❑ Gala Banquet with Speaker **Bonnie Block**

For more information:
www.olympicbirdfest.org
info@olympicbirdfest.org
or 360-681-4076

Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau
For lodging and visitor information, call 800-942-4042 or click www.olympicpeninsula.org

SEQUIM WASHINGTON
www.visitsunnysequim.com
800-737-8462

Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com
Vice President	Bob Shade	wrshade3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Kristine Haglund	kahaglund1@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Tina Jones (2017)	tjcalliope@hotmail.com
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Chris Rurik (2018)	chrisrurik@gmail.com
Ira Sanders (2017)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Karen von Saltza (2017)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
David Suddjian (2017)	dsuddjian@gmail.com
Lynn Willcockson (2017)	lynnliz2698@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Bill Wuerthele	wuerthel@ecentral.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Susan Blansett	admin@dfobirds.org
	Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Kay Niyo	kay@kayniyo.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Kay Niyo, editor, kay@kayniyo.com. Contact Kay Niyo with questions or comments: kay@kayniyo.com, 303-679-6646. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome new members: Nathaniel and Julia Auckland, Denver; Melinda Avery, Denver; Bonnie Boex, Dillon; Cindy Bouldin, Parker; R. Dale Brown, Denver; Amy Gilmer, Denver; Deborah Hebblewhite, Denver; Yes and David Hennes, Denver; Thomas Holub, Littleton; Stan Kebbe, Aurora; John Malenich, Boulder; Mike Masny, Aurora; Tracy Rackauskas, Denver; Elaine Wagner, Greenwood Village; Deb Wittwer, Arvada

Upcoming Speakers

Scott Somershoe

“Appalachian Golden

Eagles” Feb. 27, 2017

Dave Leatherman

“Squirrels and Birds”

Mar. 27, 2017

Nathan Pieplow

“Bird Song”

Apr. 25, 2017

(New Date)

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

Denver CBC Highlights

Vireo and Nuthatch IDs

Bird Club Taxonomy

Featured This Month

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

The Lark Bunting



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/APRIL 2017/VOL 53 NO 4

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Denver City Park (Denver County) Saturday, April 1

7:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email:
patodrisk@gmail.com Phone:
303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the parking strip southeast of 22nd Ave just north of Ferril Lake. From Colorado Blvd, turn west onto 22nd Ave and go past the Museum of Nature and Science. Turn left just before the zoo at the sign to the Pavilion Bandstand. Park on the left at the end of the parking area closest to Ferril Lake.

We will focus on observation and photography of nesting cormorants, herons, and egrets in Ferril and Duck lakes as part of DFO's Colonial Waterbird Nesting Project. Bring spotting scope and camera if you have them.

Night-herons and egrets (Ferril Lake) may be building nests, and cormorants (Duck Lake) will be into their nesting cycle. Bring water, snacks, and sunscreen.

Register online or contact leader.

South Platte Park Sunday, April 2

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email:
GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the south end of South Platte Park near C-470. From C-470 take the

Continued on page 2

Fox squirrel—cutest devil on the block

The DFO program on fox squirrels and their influence on the urban and riparian forests will be provided on March 27 by Dave Leatherman. Dave has an M.S. in Forestry from Duke University and served as the forest entomologist for the Colorado State Forest Service from 1974 to 2005.

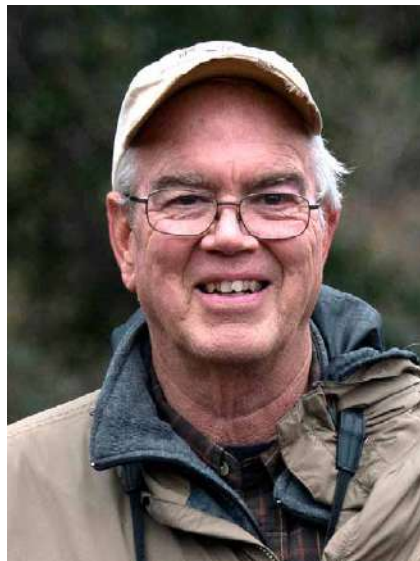
Given our current fascination with, and seemingly blind path toward the end of human civilization, it is inevitable Hollywood will issue yet another movie in the "Mad Max" series. Replacing Mel Gibson as driver of the cobbled-together desert vehicle will be Planet Earth's ultimate survivor, a helmeted fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*).

This reddish rodent is perhaps the most familiar mammal to most humans living in cities along the Front Range. It is certainly no stranger to birders. Being mostly arboreal, squirrels constantly barge into our fields of view as we sort through warblers, gnatcatchers, and floaters for a "good bird." But how much audience do we give them? How much do we really know about this cunning creature that arguably has as much influence as we do on the urban and riparian forests all around us?

In Colorado, the fox squirrel is native only to the Platte River drainage and associated portions of the eastern plains. Because of natural and human-aided spread, it now occurs throughout the state east of the Front Range and has pushed far west into the lower mountains in some areas.

Its seemingly endless activities viewed through numerous human filters consign it to various lists, like "Most Loathed" and "Cutest," simultaneously.

Continued on page 4



Dave Leatherman. Janeal Thompson



Fox squirrel gangster portrait, Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins, CO. Dave Leatherman

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Platte Canyon Rd/South Platte Park exit. From Platte Canyon Rd at Depew Street turn south-east onto the entrance road for South Platte Park. Continue past a 90-degree left turn and the first parking lot, and meet in the second parking lot.

We will walk up the South Platte for about two miles. There should be early migrants in the riparian habitats in this corridor. **Register online or contact leader.**

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Saturday, April 8 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Candice Johnson (Email: candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Phone: 303-329-8131)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

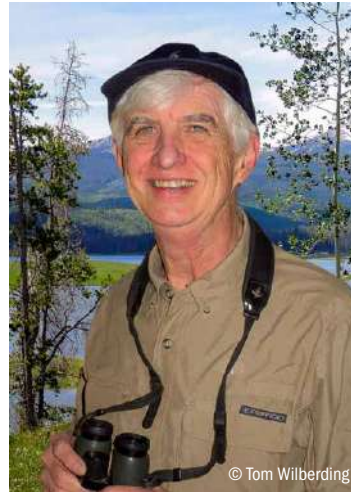
Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO. General directions: On I-70 east, take exit 278, turn left onto Quebec St, turn right onto E 60th Ave, turn left onto Trenton St, continue onto Gateway Rd to Visitor Center.

We hope to see avocet and maybe other early shorebirds. We will drive the new 11-mile Wildlife Drive looking for raptors, so bring a 2-way radio if you have one. Be prepared to car-pool because parking is limited at the lakes.

Bison and deer are likely to be seen. We will only walk on level trails. Plenty of restrooms and pit toilets, but limited picnic space. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on next page

Who's who, who knew, and who's new?



From the President

Joe Roller

Elsewhere in this edition of *The Lark Bunting*, Nominating Committee Chair Bill Wuerthele presents the slate of candidates for officer and director positions on the DFO Board. They will stand for election at our annual meeting on **Tuesday, April 25 (note day and date change)**.

One of the hallmarks of a growing, thriving organization like DFO is timely rotation of DFO Board Officers and Directors, keeping a good balance between experienced members and “new blood.”

Who's who?

These five DFO Officers and Directors have served DFO well and are stepping down in April, having finished their terms of

service. “Thank you” barely begins to express our gratitude to them.

- **Lynn Wilcockson:** Lynn is a long-time board member, having served as president and treasurer, and more recently as chair of the Ptarmigan Award Committee. Lynn will leave the board in April, but has agreed to continue the committee's work as a non-board chair.
- **Tina Jones:** Tina has also been loyal to DFO, serving on the board for over 15 years, working with Lynn on the Ptarmigan Award Committee and with Candice Johnson on the Research, Education, and Conservation (Grants) Committee. Tina will leave the board in April, but has agreed to continue in those roles.
- **Bob Shade:** DFO's Monday evening programs are a hallmark for the organization, and for years Bob has been responsible for lining up engaging speakers month after month. Bob will step down in April and then be a mentor for the new program chair.
- **Chris Rurik:** During his two years on the board, Chris took on several roles. He developed DFO's Facebook page, worked to start a young birders' group, served on the Field Trip Committee, and represented DFO as a cofounder of the new CPW Wildlife and Habitat Roundtable. Chris will soon return to his native Washington state, where he and Dr. Mimi Chau will be married on June 10. Chris plans to finish his book on the history and natural history of the family farm on the Washington coast.
- **Kris Haglund:** Current Secretary Kris Haglund will step down from that role, but will continue her service as historian. So, she has been nominated to the board as a director.

Who knew?

Past President Chuck Hundertmark has agreed to serve again as DFO President. During Chuck's previous tenure as president, 2011–2015, DFO made tremendous strides. Welcome back, Chuck!

Continued on page 3

We're fortunate that active field trip leader David Suddjian will stand for election as vice president. We will now have a line of succession, as David has agreed to be nominated as president whenever Chuck steps down.

Hard-working Treasurer Sue Summers and Membership Chair Mary Cay Burger will continue. Ira Sanders, Karen von Saltza, and Kristine Haglund, whose terms are ending in April, have agreed to continue as directors for three more years.

Who's new?

Three nominees, Debbie James, Sharon Tinianow, and Bill Turner will be new to the board.

- Debbie James will run as secretary. Debbie has experience as secretary for a family-owned business, has served as the president of the Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association, and for nine years worked on the Lowry Redevelopment issue. Debbie has been a HawkWatch volunteer for the past four years.
- Sharon Tinianow will be on the ballot as a board member and as editor of *The Lark Bunting*. Currently she is the Assistant Director of the University of Colorado's Museum of Natural History and has been on boards of other nonprofits. Sharon is an experienced editor, has the temperament for what can be a sensitive position, and will be an ideal team member.
- Bill Turner will run as a board member and serve as program chair. Bill is a long-time DFO member and well known to the membership as the leader of international birding tours. He is eager to continue our tradition of high-quality evening presentations. The board was recently reorganized to establish the position of program chair. That frees up the vice president to work as an assistant to the president.

Currently serving on the board are these productive directors: Tom Behnfield, Susan Blansett, Will Burt, Candice Johnson, Kay Niyo, and Ira Sanders.

Kay Niyo has been serving as both website administrator and editor of *The Lark Bunting*, two key positions. No one has worked harder than Kay. She has asked to relinquish her editorial duties after the May *Lark Bunting* issue so that she can have more time to go birding. Good idea!

She agreed to remain as a website administrator for a few months to train new people. Kay will stay on the board as a director and will mentor the new editor and administrators.

As you may know, the Nominating Committee works year-round now, identifying, recruiting, and interviewing DFO members to come up with this strong slate of nominees. Bill Wuerthele has been the able chair, assisted by Candice Johnson through this fall and more recently by Susan Blansett, and with me as an advisor.

We reached out to you members with our survey last summer and through our call for volunteers in a recent *Lark Bunting*. That paid off, with several nominees identified that way. Thanks for your valuable input, and please continue!

Finally, as of April 25 at 8 p.m., I will have achieved my life-long ambition—that of becoming Denver Field Ornithologist's PAST President!

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Sunday, April 9

7:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO, located on the SW corner of Main St and 20 Mile Rd for birding there and later at the Rueter-Hess Reservoir, which is open to the public only with entry permission.

Tim Ryan, Parker Water Dept, will co-lead. We will first bird at the Barr CCC Park in Parker, which is next to Cherry Creek, to check for riparian birds.

The next stop will be Rueter-Hess Reservoir, Parker Water Department's new reservoir not yet open to the public. There we could see grassland species and waterfowl. Bring binoculars, snacks, water, and sunscreen. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, April 9

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

or muddy, so dress accordingly. Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chico Basin Ranch Saturday, April 15 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: To carpool, meet at the King Soopers parking lot at 100 Founders Parkway (just east of I-25) in Castle Rock, CO. One-day birding pass for Chico Basin Ranch is \$15 or \$10/individual when with a DFO group. This is a fee area.

We need volunteers with high clearance vehicles to drive on ranch roads. Let leader know if you can drive.

Chico Basin Ranch is a working cattle ranch located in El Paso/Pueblo counties, south-east of Colorado Springs. The driving distance from Castle Rock will be approximately 100 miles, a little over two hours. The ranch will be birded by following the ranch roads in vehicles with stops to bird on level open areas such as ponds, wetlands, and grasslands.

This will be an all-day trip so please bring water and lunch. Scopes will be handy but not necessary. A two-way radio per car would be helpful. We will bird until 4 p.m. and should be back at Castle Rock around 6 p.m. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on next page

Explore upcoming DFO birding adventures

by Chuck Hundertmark, Past President

This month and next, DFO is launching three new twists to our mainstay of field trips. The month of May will see DFO's first Big Month effort, an idea that vice president nominee David Suddjian brought to us from California. Many of our May field trips will be part of this project aimed at documenting as many species as possible in a nine-county Denver area.

April sees the launch of two DFO citizen science projects. In partnership with Denver Museum of Nature and Science Ornithologist Garth Spellman, DFO members can help map the distribution of Warbling Vireo and White-breasted Nuthatch subspecies in the same nine-county area covered by the big month. Some trip leaders will make this project part of their field trips. Members can also participate individually.

DFO's Colonial Waterbird Nestwatch Project, headed by Patrick O'Driscoll, is also launching in April. This project will begin more regular monitoring of cormorant, egret, and heron colonies at several Denver area lakes. The City Park and Washington Park colonies will be a major focus of the project.

We'll also be monitoring the Belmar Park and Tabor Lake colonies. This project will also include both field trip and individual participation. To learn more about the Citizen Science projects, go to <http://dfobirds.org/DFO/CitizenScience.aspx> on the DFO website (under Field Trips). Details of the DFO Colonial Waterbird Nestwatch Project are already posted there. Vireo-

Continued on page 5

FOX SQUIRREL, continued from page 1

They dominate the situation with tree cavities, including those of potential use to over 40 species of Colorado birds. They help shape the architecture of our trees. They are essentially omnivorous, and even push the envelope to attempt eating inedible objects. They carve pumpkins. They make leaf nests in trees called "drays" that magically don't blow away when the TV weather guesser proclaims, "Windy tomorrow with breezes out of the northwest, gusts up to 50 mph. They are inventors, particularly adept at hacking "squirrel-proof" bird feeders. They can be a fashion statement, valuable link in food chains, planter of plants, seemingly suicidal, tightrope walker, free insect pest controller, dumpster diver, cold-blooded murderer, squirrelly, and much more.

At the March meeting we will attempt to flesh out the amazing life history of this interesting animal. Regardless of your opinion of the fox squirrel, you will learn something new that alters your view going forward.

The DFO meeting is at 7:30 p.m. in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

**Thank you for your contribution to the Research,
Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Meredith An-
derson, Lee and Linda Farrell, Amanda Horvath**

New Pieplow book

Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America by Nathan Pieplow. March 7, 2017. 608 pp, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York. ISBN-10: 0547905580. \$28 (paperback).

Nathan Pieplow has published a long-awaited book in the Peterson series. It can be found discounted at several places. It will be on sale online and in local book stores on March 7.

When Nathan speaks at our annual DFO meeting on TUESDAY, APRIL 25, he will sign copies of books that you have purchased ahead of time and bring to the meeting. So, act now! Way to go, Nathan, and see you at the April meeting!

EXPLORE, *continued from page 4*

Nuthatch project details will be available soon.

All three of these projects will provide opportunities for the three main elements of birding: learning, sociability, and fun. Choose whichever project piques your interest, or try all three.

In last month's issue of *The Lark Bunting*, I traced the taxonomy of a bird club to the higher phylogenetic category of "organization." There seems to be an organic imperative for organizations to grow, and the best organizations do that by serving their members.

These new DFO projects to open new birding opportunities for members emerged from last year's DFO Board retreat where board members strategized about the future of DFO. The Citizen Science projects were matured in discussions among DFO field trip leaders at our second DFO Trip Leader Forum. Over the months ahead look for more DFO eggs to hatch.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Cameron Pass for Boreal Owls

Saturday, April 15

2:00 PM - 11:50 PM

Francis Commercon & Paul Slingsby (Email: siskinbyderailleur@gmail.com Phone: 303-470-9130)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at 2 p.m. at SW corner of Moby Arena at CSU campus, Fort Collins to carpool. From Denver take I-25 north to Prospect Road, exit 268. West on Prospect until Shields St, north on Shields to Elizabeth Street. Turn right (east) into the giant parking lot for Moby Arena.

We will start at Moose Visitor Center for mountain specialties like rosy-finches, Pine Grosbeak, Northern Goshawk, Cassin's Finch. We will then return to Cameron Pass and hike out to the (pre-scouted) area where we will look for Boreal Owl after sunset.

We will eat dinner on the trail and keep an eye out for American Three-toed Woodpecker. We will listen for Boreal Owl after dark. Two years we saw a porcupine...this trip is loads of fun!

This is a difficult trip. We will be snowshoeing for up to 6 miles with between 200-500 ft elevational gain. (Exact details will be determined with scouting prior to trip, contact us as date approaches.) We will be hiking in the mountains at high elevation at night.

Bring your own dinner. Bring hand warmers and a headlight with extra batteries. Hats and gloves are required, and warm drinks in thermoses are suggested. Please bring your own snowshoes. We can provide limited pairs for those who don't have them—let us know in advance if you will need snowshoes. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cañon City

Sunday, April 16

6:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Ira Sanders & Tammy Sanders (Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Safeway at 9229 East Lincoln Ave, Lone Tree, Co 80124. From I-25 take the Lincoln Exit, number 193, West. Go west almost a mile. The Safeway will be on your right, just before Yosemite Street.

Expect to see Scaled Quail, Canyon Wren, Rock Wren, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Mountain Bluebirds. We can hope for Juniper Titmouse, Pinyon Jay, Gray Flycatcher, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We will visit Temple Canyon, Tunnel Drive, the River Walk, the Abbey and other places around Canyon City.

Pack a lunch, snacks, plenty of water, and sunscreen. No park pass required. This will be mostly easy walking except at Temple Canyon. Be prepared to car pool. **Register online or contact leader.**

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Friday, April 21

7:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy Maximum Participants: 10

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Directions: Meet at the parking strip southeast of 22nd Ave just north of Ferril Lake. From Colorado Blvd, turn west onto 22nd Ave and go past the Museum of Nature and Science. Turn left just before the zoo at the sign to the Pavilion Bandstand. Park on the left at the end of the parking area closest to Ferril Lake.

We will focus on photography of the heronry and cormorant colony and documenting nesting status as part of DFO's Colonial Waterbird Nesting Project. Bring spotting scope and camera if you have them. Night-herons and egrets should be building nests, and cormorants will be well into the nesting cycle. Don't forget water, snacks, and sunscreen. **Register online or contact leader.**

**Cheyenne Bottoms & Quivira NWR, Great Bend, KS
Saturday, April 22–23
6:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Drive on your own to Great Bend, KS on Friday. Meet Saturday at 6 a.m. at Quality Inn, 3500 10th St in Great Bend, KS.

This is a 3-day trip. Experience Spring migration in the Central Flyway at the peak of shorebird season. See many eastern species, 100+ species possible.

Bring scopes if possible. Arrive on your own in Great Bend, KS on Friday. Meet Saturday at 6 a.m. at the Quality Inn, 3500 10th St in Great Bend to bird Quivira NWR. Sunday at 5 a.m.

Continued on next page

Last Month's Program: *Golden Eagles*

Tim Johnson

A corps of DFO stalwarts assembled on the chilly night of February 27 to enjoy "Eastern Golden Eagles: Tree-Hugging Forest Dwellers," presented by Scott Somershoe. Scott, currently the Land Bird Coordinator in the Migratory Bird Program for the 8-state Region 6 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service, served as state ornithologist for nine years in Tennessee (further background was well described in the March *Lark Bunting*). His talk revealed new perspectives on Golden Eagles as well as glimpses of what recent technology can bring to ornithology and land use planning. (See video of presentation at <http://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>.)

The largest populations of Golden Eagles occur in western states, but a few thousand (4,000–5,000) breed in Quebec and Labrador and migrate south to spend winters in Appalachia. In Tennessee, they are seen most often in the western part of the state along the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers. The Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group (<http://www.appalachianeagles.org>; website needs updating) initiated a research project to explore basic questions about these birds in their winter habitat. Where are they and how many? What is their habitat, diet, and movements? Where do they come from and how do they get there and back?

To attract eagles in Tennessee, they established about 28 sites baited with road-kill deer, using the edges of small forest clearings as sites for cameras and rocket-propelled net traps. Sounds simple—drag in deer carcass, set up equipment, and wait. However, the carcasses needed rebar stakes and foot snares to prevent them from becoming dragged off by coyotes. Plenty of other scavengers turned up to purloin the bounty, including ravens, bobcats, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Bald Eagles. So, the remote camera images proved to be a gold mine of data for species other than Golden Eagles.

The Golden Eagles themselves were so skittish that one cough or ill-timed twig snap made them disappear for good, in part because these heavy birds need a few seconds to launch and are thus vulnerable on the ground. Some bait sites in western Tennessee never attracted an eagle, although Golden Eagles were seen happily hunting nearby. About half the sites were visited by eagles, all in eastern Tennessee.

The group has also tagged 12 Tennessee Golden Eagles with GPS-GSM tracking devices, through January 2017. These solar-powered units can send altitude, speed, and GPS coordinate data through a mobile phone network; can store up to 100,000 data points for later retrieval; and can be reprogrammed "on the wing." Scott described individual birds who have provided exceptional data. Below are three. You can find remote camera and tracking data (see especially the Hytop link below!) at <http://tnwatchablewildlife.org>.

Freedom Hill: An Alabama juvenile who traveled to the Gaspe Peninsula via Cleveland and Chicago. She died from unknown causes trying to cross the St. Lawrence River. Large bodies of water are major obstacles to Golden Eagles, as they cannot sustain powered flight for long periods.

Jericho: *Twit*chy when captured, Jericho was carrying 78 µg/100 ml of lead in her bloodstream, 5–10 times the levels known to cause problems. Follow-

Continued on page 7

Election of officers and directors

At its April 25, 2017 annual business meeting, DFO will elect a full slate of officers for the next year and five directors for three-year terms. As set out in the bylaws, the election will be by majority of the voting members present in person at the annual meeting. The voting will be by voice vote.

The nominated officers and directors are

Officers (one-year term)

Chuck Hundertmark	President
David Suddjian	Vice President
Debbie James	Secretary
Sue Summers	Treasurer
Mary Cay Burger	Membership Chair

Board of Directors (three-year term)

Kristine Haglund	Historian
Ira Sanders	Legal Advisor
Karen von Saltza	Field Trip Director
Sharon Tinianow	Editor
Bill Turner	Program Chair

Vice President Bob Shade and Directors Tina Jones, Chris Rurik, and Lynn Willcockson will be leaving the board in April. The board thanks Bob, Tina, Chris, and Lynn for their years of excellent service to the DFO.

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, continued from page 6

ing chelation therapy, Jericho was released. Unfortunately lead (in humans) can leach anew from bone, so Jericho may have become *twitchy* again (she has not checked in this winter).

Hytop: (<http://www.tnwatchablewildlife.org/hytop.cfm>) Migrated to Quebec from southern Tennessee through Indiana and Michigan, being careful to cross into the Upper Peninsula at the Mackinac Bridge. For the entire trip, Hytop followed forested riparian corridors, sometimes extremely narrow; jumped from block to block of forest; and roosted in the largest block of forest available.

Another bird migrated north along a ridgeline festooned with wind turbines for miles. It survived, but clearly this is a significant issue now that turbines are getting higher, larger, and more common.

Overall, the study indicated that (1) there are lots of Eastern Golden Eagles out there, but they're in the woods where you wouldn't think to look for them! Several tagged birds highlighted this, never venturing out of a forested area for weeks at a time. (2) Conservation of large forest blocks is important for Eastern Golden Eagles and probably for other species. (3) Lead is a serious concern. (4) West Tennessee Golden Eagles differ from East Tennessee Golden Eagles. The Working Group hopes to trap some western Tennessee eagles, quantify landscape use data obtained from tracking, and encourage the use of their data in siting wind power development. We wish them well.

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

we will go to Greater Prairie Chicken lek and bird Cheyenne Bottoms. Drive home Sunday afternoon.

Expenses: Approx. 800 miles driving, 2 motel nights in Great Bend, 3 days meals, \$25 fee to Kansas Wildlife for the lek. Contact leader for more details. Please try to carpool as much as possible. **Register online or contact leader.**

Bluff Lake Nature Center Sunday, April 23

7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Pratyaydipta Rudra & Sreemala Das Majumder (Email: pratyayr@gmail.com Phone: 919-699-4043)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From I-70 East, go south on Havana Street and left onto E 29th Dr, which then joins Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Continue on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd to Bluff Lake Nature Center in the park on left side.

Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat: wetland, yucca, and large cottonwoods. This attracts a variety of raptors and songbirds. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. Paths are easy walking trails. However, there is a stair to go down to the trail. We'll be walking about 2 miles. Bring plenty of water, snacks, sunscreen. Scopes are optional. **Register online or contact leader.**

Jackson Lake Reservoir Saturday, April 29

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Continued on page 8

Field Trips

Continued from page 7

Directions: Meet at Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway. Exit I-25 at 58th Ave, go west 2 blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to parking lot on right to carpool. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is an all-day trip so bring lunch, plenty of water, bug spray, and sunscreen. Scopes will be helpful and remember your mud boots as we may hike through some mud. We'll be looking for White-breasted Nuthatches to learn if they are Eastern or Interior West. We should catch early shorebird migration as well as other early migrants. Plan to carpool and remain for the full trip. **Register online or contact leader.**

First Creek at Denver Open Space

Sunday, April 30

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch & Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north). Or take I-70 east to Pena Blvd. Drive north to 56th Ave Exit. Turn left at the light and at the bottom of the off ramp, pass under the highway and turn right, almost immediately, into the First Creek parking lot.

We will walk 1.5 miles of paved path along the creek upstream to Tower Road and back. We'll also cover at least half a mile of Buckley Road, a

Continued on next page

The DFO Colonial Waterbird Project

by Patrick O'Driscoll, Project Coordinator

The cormorants and herons of Colorado are now returning, and the egrets won't be far behind. Some share the webbed feet of our winter waterfowl. Others have stick legs for wading. But most of these colonial waterbirds share a trait that gladdens birders across metro Denver: they nest among us.

They congregate like we do, too: within sight of downtown skyscrapers and favorite suburban haunts. What's more, their island high-rises are open for everyone to see.

And now, they are the subject of a new citizen science initiative. The Denver Field Ornithologists Colonial Waterbird Project is now open to your participation. With your help and the power of eBird, the project will monitor Denver-area populations of five waterbird species that nest in colonies here: Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Snowy Egret, and Cattle Egret.

Our 2017 pilot project will record breeding, nesting, and fledging data throughout the year at four well-known locations: Denver City Park, Washington Park in Denver, Belmar Park in Lakewood, and the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt.

At season's end, we will compile your eBird counts and observations to help establish baselines for each breeding colony. In subsequent years, we expect that analysis of the data and observations—population, seasonal colony fluctuations, ecology, bird health, and the condition of nesting sites themselves—will inform efforts to protect and conserve existing sites and potential successor locations.

The best part is that anyone can participate at any time. DFO will schedule field trips that focus on nesting colonies in the four pilot locations (and per-

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Double-crested cormorants in tight quarters at Duck Lake nesting colony, February 2017. *Patrick O'Driscoll*

WATERBIRD PROJECT, continued from page 8

haps special outings “behind the fence” at two others). But individual birders and informal groups can also visit on their own and file observations via eBird. So can participants on any regular, general-birding DFO trips to these parks.

Sharing your birding lists and field notes (photos, too) is easy, via a special eBird account, **dfowaterbirds**, that DFO has created to gather the data.

How-to details and tools are available with a couple of clicks on the DFO website at <http://dfobirds.org/DFO/CitizenScience.aspx>. Click on Colonial Waterbirds. We will continue to add content as the season progresses, including summary profiles about breeding, nesting, and fledging behavior of our five target species.

The project was hatched this winter after discussions last fall at a DFO board retreat and a field trip leader forum. There was keen interest in enlisting DFO members in meaningful citizen science by channeling your abilities in the way we all know best—birding in the field.

There’s added educational value in participating, too. We can contribute to greater understanding of our colonial waterbird populations while we enjoy discovering more about their behavior and life cycles.

As you read this, the birds are already moving in. Some among the scores of Double-crested Cormorants in Denver City Park’s island rookery may already be incubating eggs in sun-bleached stick nests above Duck Lake.

A few of us have been observing them and other waterbird sites, but we’ll need the strength in numbers that DFO can provide as the colonies grow. Come join us, won’t you?

Visit the DFO website (link above) today. And if you have more questions, you can contact me at patodrisk@gmail.com or 303-885-6955.

Good waterbirding!

February 2017 Bird Tally!

We start 2017 with 95 species seen by DFO trip participants so far compared to 111 in February 2016! Join the fun DFO birding in preparation for the Big Month in May! <http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/Reports/Cumulative.aspx>.

Save the dates!

The next two DFO meetings are scheduled for Monday, March 27 and (brace yourself)

TUESDAY, APRIL 25! Yes, April 25, our first ever TUESDAY DFO meeting at the DMNS.

We have been bumped from our usual April meeting day by an event at the DMNS that will fill all the rooms and parking lots. So please mark your calendar and attend the DFO Annual Meeting on TUESDAY, April 25.

Field Trips

Continued from page 8

closed pedestrian-bicycle strip that shares Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR’s east boundary fence. Bring water and snacks.

Note: At present, there are no restrooms at this location. The closest service stations are on Tower Road (Green Valley Ranch) and East 40th (Montbello). **Register online or contact leader.**

Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge Sunday, April 30

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Jill Boice (Email: jill@booksandcats.net)
Phone: 303-863-7580)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: 6120 S Highway 15, Monte Vista, CO 81144. From Monte Vista, go east on U.S. 285/160 about 3 miles. Turn south on S Co Rd 3 E and travel about 8.7 miles. Go west on W Co Rd 6 S to the Visitor Center.

Overnight Trip. Casey Setash, a graduate student at CSU, is tracking Cinnamon Teal at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge. Her research, focused on survival rates, has received funding from DFO. (See <http://tinyurl.com/j75xep9>).

Casey will take us to an area where she is trapping ducks for hands-on-fun. Then she will take us for a tour of a couple of interesting areas around the refuge for general birding. These might include areas that are not normally open to the public, depending on conditions at the time.

For those in arriving in Monte Vista the day ahead, we will probably meet for a late afternoon visit to the refuge, to be determined. Please try to carpool from Denver. Contact Jill for further details. **Register online or contact leader.**

—Scheduled by Jill Boice

12:20 PM
02/25/17
Cash Basis

Denver Field Ornithologists Inc
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2016

	Dec 31, 16
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Denver Field Ornithologists Inc	24,284.23
Total Checking/Savings	24,284.23
Total Current Assets	24,284.23
TOTAL ASSETS	24,284.23
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	22,285.28
Net Income	1,998.95
Total Equity	24,284.23
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	24,284.23

6:45 PM
02/27/17
Cash Basis

Denver Field Ornithologists Inc
Profit & Loss
January through December 2016

	Jan - Dec 16
Income	
Direct Public Support	
Individual Contributions	6,399.00
Misc Donations	537.33
Total Direct Public Support	6,936.33
Other Types of Income	
Miscellaneous Revenue	365.00
Total Other Types of Income	365.00
Program Income	
Membership Dues	10,200.00
Total Program Income	10,200.00
Total Income	17,501.33
Expense	
Bank Fees	26.20
Contract Services	
Website Maintenance	600.00
Total Contract Services	600.00
Grants Distributed	6,000.00
Operations	
Layout Services	2,925.00
Postage, Mailing Service	9.08
Printing and Copying	1,917.61
Software	185.24
Speakers Fees, Honoraria	1,000.00
Supplies	218.34
Website Hosting and Other	166.33
Total Operations	6,421.60
Other Types of Expenses	
Insurance - Liability, D and O	1,287.00
PayPal Expense	222.58
Sec'y of State annual filing	10.00
Total Other Types of Expenses	1,519.58
Travel and Meetings	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	285.00
Meeting room rental	650.00
Total Travel and Meetings	935.00
Total Expense	15,502.38
Net Income	1,998.95

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com
Vice President	Bob Shade	wrshade3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Kristine Haglund	kahaglund1@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Tina Jones (2017)	tjcalliope@hotmail.com
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Chris Rurik (2018)	chrisrurik@gmail.com
Ira Sanders (2017)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Karen von Saltza (2017)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
David Suddjian (2017)	dsuddjian@gmail.com
Lynn Willcockson (2017)	lynnliz2698@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Bill Wuerthele	wuerthel@ecentral.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Susan Blansett	admin@dfobirds.org
	Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Kay Niyo	kay@kayniyo.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Kay Niyo, editor, kay@kayniyo.com. Contact Kay Niyo with questions or comments: kay@kayniyo.com, 303-679-6646. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome new members: Mary Klinnert and Allen Adinoff, Greenwood Village; Amy and Juan Gimenez, Centennial; Teresa Gurth, Parker; Marie Hoerner, Aurora; Amanda Horvath, Denver; Linda Martin, Henderson; Nina and Bobby Stewart, Aurora; Brenda Walls, Arvada

Upcoming Speakers

Dave Leatherman

“Fox Squirrel in Northern
Colorado”

Mar. 27

Nathan Pieplow

“Mystery Owl of Mexico”

Apr. 25

(Note Tuesday Date)

Christian Hagenlocher

TBD

Aug. 28

Gemara Gifford

“Birds and Coffee”

Sep. 25

Scott Rashid

“Barn Owls”

Oct. 23

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$	10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$	_____

Total	\$	_____
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Name(s) _____

Address _____

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Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

Officer, Director Election

New Adventures

Who, Who, Who?

Featured This Month

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

The Lark Bunting



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MAY 2017/VOL 53 NO 5

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Aurora Reservoir and Prairie Roads (Arapahoe County) Monday, May 1 5:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com)
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the north-east corner of Parker Rd and Quincy Ave in Aurora.

More specifically gather on the south edge of the parking lot opposite Denver Mattress.

We'll spend the morning at and around Aurora Reservoir (\$10/vehicle park entry fee) looking for lingering geese and gulls, shorebirds, grebes, possible loons, and welcoming arriving migrants.

Plan for a few miles of mostly level walking.

Later stops will be determined by weather and what seems best, but may include a visit to the DIA loop road for Burrowing Owl and other raptors.

Dress for variety of weather. Rain may cancel, but snow probably will not (good for migrants!).

Bring scope if possible. Bring lunch, snacks, and drinks. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County) Friday, May 5 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Bill Wuerthele (Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com Phone: 303-333-2519)

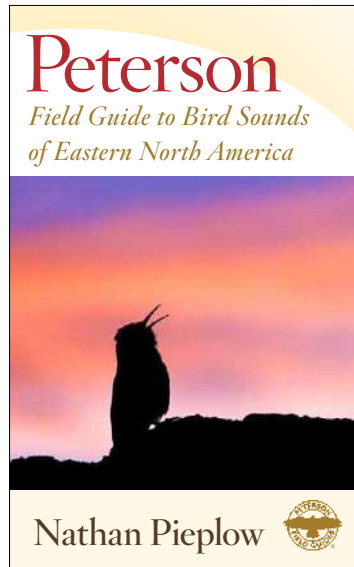
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the west

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3 years, many miles reveal mystery owl



Nathan Pieplow will present an exciting new program for DFO. **Please note the date change to TUESDAY, APRIL 25 in the Ricketson Auditorium.**

As many of Nathan's fans are probably aware, his long-awaited *Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America* was published on March 7.

Since many of his previous DFO presentations were based on portions from his new book, he decided to treat us to a new topic!

As he said, "You all saw the 'book talk' long before there was a book!" But be sure and buy it if you haven't already!

In 2015, Nathan Pieplow and Andrew Spencer obtained the first-ever photographs and audio recordings of the Cinereous Owl, a little-known bird of the mountains of Mexico. This talk

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Nathan Pieplow. Bob McGuire

Field Trips

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marina parking lot. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods.

We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles.

Bring binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and bug repellent. Scopes are useful.

Register online or contact leader.

Prospect Park (Wheat Ridge Greenbelt)

Saturday, May 6

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue.

Go one mile west. Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south). Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This is a trip with easy walking and accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Bring water and a snack; lunch optional.

Good trip for novice birders and new members. **Register online or contact leader.**

Apex Park-lower East entrance Sunday, May 7

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Parking for the East entrance is at the north-east corner of the Heritage Square parking lot.

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Trip leaders learn their subspecies

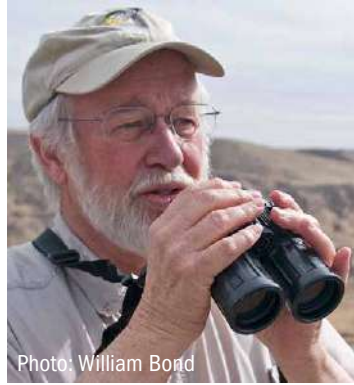


Photo: William Bond

by Chuck Hundertmark, Past President

"What we're starting here could be pretty important," Garth Spellman told 23 DFO field trip leaders kicking off a joint DFO-Denver Museum of Nature and Science research project.

Spellman, Curator of Ornithology at the museum, was introducing the trip leaders to the skills they'll need to document observations of Warbling Vireo and White-breasted Nuthatch subspecies.

The Ph.D. ornithologist explained that there is a movement toward using citizen science data in ornithological studies. Spellman has been exploring the question of whether subspecies of White-breasted Nuthatches may represent separate species. There is a similar question about subspecies of Warbling Vireos.

One fact that ornithologists consider when addressing the speciation question is whether the ranges of different subspecies come into contact and, if they do, does hybridization occur.

Eastern Colorado offers a perfect setting to examine what happens as eastern populations of both the vireo and nuthatch edge westward coming in contact with their Rocky Mountain relatives.

Spellman is asking DFO trip leaders and birders to identify the vireos and nuthatches down to the geographic race level. In the March 11 workshop, he described the visual and call distinctions that separate the eastern and Rocky Mountain populations.

Distinguishing eastern from Rocky Mountain White-breasted Nuthatches requires a keen ear and a keen eye, according to Spellman. The gray of the back of the eastern form is lighter than that of the Rocky Mountain form. As a result, there is more contrast between the black and gray of the secondary coverts.

The ornithologist illustrated the plumage difference with specimens from the DMNS collection. While the difference was clear between some specimens, in some cases it was difficult to distinguish an eastern from a nearly identical Rocky Mountain specimen. This brought home the importance of recognizing the call differences between the two forms.

Both subspecies have several call patterns. Rocky Mountain White-breasted Nuthatches have a very distinctive disyllabic call. But they also have several calls that are more difficult to distinguish from calls of their eastern counterparts.

That makes pitch a more reliable clue to subspecies. The eastern call has a lower pitch, while the Rocky Mountain birds have a higher pitch.

Nathan Pieplow's *Earbirding* blog has a three-part discussion of the eastern and Rocky Mountain nuthatch calls (<http://earbirding.com/blog/?s=White-breasted+Nuthatch>).

Subspecies of Warbling Vireo can present similar challenges. The eastern

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Wendy Wibbens, Karen Drozda, and other trip leaders listen as Garth Spellman discusses eastern and Rocky Mountain White-breasted Nuthatch identification. *Chuck Hundertmark*

[blog/archives/3667](http://earbirding.com/blog/archives/3667)).

DFO birders will be able to download a program based on the March 11 workshop from the DFO website shortly.

race has a lighter breast and whiter chin. The Rocky Mountain birds are duller, with an olive grayish throat.

The song of the eastern birds is more sing-songy and tends to end on an up note.

Rocky Mountain birds have more high notes, and the song is more broken. It may occasionally end on an up note, but more often ends on a down note.

Andrew Spencer addressed the eastern/western Warbling Vireo challenges in an entry on the *Earbirding* blog. The entry covers both plumage and song differences between the subspecies (<http://earbirding.com/>



Garth Spellman discusses White-breasted Nuthatch subspecies with DFO field trip leaders. *Chuck Hundertmark*

Field Trips

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The address of Heritage Square is 18301 West Colfax, Golden.

From Metro Denver, go west on U.S. Highway 6. As you near Golden, use the left lanes to turn slightly left on U.S. 40 West (Colfax).

In about a mile, U.S. 40 curves southward. Very soon, Heritage Square signage will be on your right.

Make a right into the large parking area. Stay rightward and go slightly north for the trailhead parking.

Apex Park is a Jefferson Co. Park. Then we will turn and drop back down the way we came.

Apex offers a variety of bird rich habitats. Target birds will be Lazuli Bunting and Green-tailed Towhee. The Enchanted Forest often has a variety of flycatchers and nuthatches.

Wear sturdy footwear and bring water and snacks. There will be a second, earlier meeting time of 5:15 a.m. for anyone who wants to do a pre-trip walk up parts of the same trail with the leader.

If you choose to do this, send the leader an email. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chatfield State Park
Tuesday, May 9
6:00 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at swim beach by entering west entrance of park off S Wadsworth, 1.5 miles south of C-470.

State Parks pass or day pass required.

We'll be looking for migrant land birds and waterbirds, and

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Field Trips

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poor weather could bring us a fall-out. A nice variety is to be expected.

Dress for a variety of conditions. Bring lunch, water, and scopes. **Register online or contact leader.**

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat/Sawhill(Boulder County)

**Saturday, May 13
7:30 AM - 4:00 PM**

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: From northbound U.S. 36, take Foothill Parkway exit. Go north 2 miles to Arapahoe Ave, then east to 75th St.

Go north on 75th St past Valmont Rd and railroad tracks. Turn left at Wildlife Habitat sign.

Follow road west and south to Cottonwood Marsh parking lot.

This will be a full-day trip beginning with a 2-mile walk on level ground. Bring binoculars, snack, lunch, and water.

We will look at waterfowl at the Walden and Sawhill Open Space areas, so bring a scope if you have one.

At 75th St and Boulder Creek, we may find dippers and spring migrants.

After finishing at this destination, we will carpool to other Boulder Co. destinations. Exact locations will be determined based on Big Month needs and recent sightings.

There may be 3-4 miles additional walking, perhaps in the foothills. **Register online or contact leader.**

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DFO announces five grants for 2017

by Candice Johnson

The Research, Education, and Conservation Committee is pleased to announce that we have awarded five excellent grants in 2017 due to the generosity of all who contributed in 2016. Our total awards were \$6,400, a new high.

This year all five were awarded for cutting edge research on threatened or endangered birds of the Front Range, mountains, and grasslands.

Our recipients, two of whom are returning for a second year of funding, are listed below. We were not able to fund any project in full due to fund limitations, but we are told that our contributions help greatly.

- Bird Diversity in Chatfield State Park Riparian Cottonwood Communities. Dr. Erin K. Bissell is affiliated with Metropolitan State University Denver. Her goal is to better inform remediation efforts at the Chatfield Reservoir based on current bird distribution.

- Spatially Dynamic Habitat Selection in Flammulated Owls. Scott Yanco is a graduate student of Dr. Michael Wunder at the University of Colorado Denver and a past student of Dr. Brian Linkhart. He will study habitat selection before and after a prescribed burn.

- Cinnamon Teal Population and Breeding Ecology: Factors Influencing Vital Rates. Casey Setash is a graduate student of Dr. Bill Kendall of CSU. This is the second year of funding for this excellent study in the Monte Vista NWR of one of the least studied birds in the United States.

- Habitat Use of Male Flammulated Owls. Katherine McGinn is an undergraduate student of Dr. Brian Linkhart of Colorado College. We are partially funding her use of GPS backpack units to follow male owl movements during the breeding season.

- Mountain Plovers of Colorado: Local and Regional Habitat Use Revealed by GPS data Loggers. Tyler Michels and Allison Pierce are graduate students of Dr. Michael Wunder of the University of Colorado Denver. This is the second year of funding for Ms. Pierce. Since there has been a 40% decline in these birds between the two breeding bird atlases, it is critical to study them further.

Members of our committee who reviewed the grants were Cochair Carol Cochran, Tina Jones, and Cochair Candice Johnson. The entire Board approved our selections. We also note that all the grantees from 2016 have been contacted to obtain reports for *The Lark Bunting* and most have now completed this requirement. Grant reports and awards are on the DFO website at <http://dfobirds.org/Grants/>.

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Laurie Chotena, Francis M Flanagan and Joanna Flanagan, Patricia Flood, Rebecca Laroche

Mary Cay Burger earns Ptarmigan Award



Mary Cay Burger. Tom Burger

Membership Chair, but before that she had already served on the DFO board since 2001 as a director, vice president and then president!

Mary Cay is a skilled birder and leads popular field trips to many of our favorite destinations: the Pawnee Grasslands, Rocky Mountain National Park, Cherry Creek State Park, and repeatedly to Rueter-Hess Reservoir. Admiring DFO members say, "When there is a job to be done, Mary Cay raises her hand."

Born in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, she and her husband moved to Englewood in 1980, where they raised three children. Mary Cay is retired registered pharmacist.

Congratulations to Mary Cay Burger!

DFO's prestigious Ptarmigan Award, given for "outstanding, loyal, and meritorious service to DFO and the advancement of bird study in Colorado" was presented to Mary Cay Burger by President Joe Roller at the March 27 DFO meeting.

Most of us know Mary Cay in her current role as

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tells the exciting story of their hunt for the owl across three years and thousands of miles.

It also details their surprising discoveries about its biology and taxonomy.

The DFO meeting is at 7:30 p.m. on TUESDAY, APRIL 25 in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium.

Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.



Cinereous Owl. Andrew Spencer

Field Trips

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Las Animas County in Migration Saturday, May 13 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Chris Rurik (Email: chrisrurik@gmail.com Phone: 253-225-7104)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: We will spend Saturday night in Trinidad. We will coordinate carpools from Denver and may scout some, having dinner together along the way.

You have the option of staying in a motel in town or camping at Trinidad Lake State Park.

This is a two-day trip. Las Animas Co. is the last county Chris Rurik needs to complete his goal of birding in all 64 counties, and he intends to do it in style, with his DFO friends!

Join him for a peak-migration effort. Many species are possible.

Explore Trinidad Lake State Park, Bosque del Oso State Wildlife Area, Cordova Pass, random county roads, and more.

Expect a full fast-paced day of birding many under-birded areas.

Chris will contact registered participants for meeting location. **Register online or contact leader.**

Mt Lindo Cemetery and Turkey Creek Park Sunday, May 14

7:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen Drozda (Email: drozforte@AOL.com Phone: 303-388-0891)

Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 South Eldridge St, Morrison.

If driving south on C-470, take

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Field Trips

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the Quincy Ave exit, turn right on Quincy Ave, then take left on West Tufts Ave.

If traveling north on 470, you will turn right onto W. Quincy after the exit, then take left on West Tufts Ave.

Home Depot sign can be seen from the highway. Meet at the Home Depot at C-470 and Hwy 285 at 7:15 a.m. to arrange carpools.

We will leave Home Depot parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Restrooms are available inside Home Depot.

We will first travel to Turkey Creek Park. Expected species: warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers, possible American Dipper, Gray Catbird.

We will then travel to Mount Lindo Memorial Park. Gates for this park open at 9 a.m.

Bring water, snacks, appropriate clothing, bug spray. **Register online or contact leader.**

Parker Regional Park

Sunday, May 14

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Kerrie Lagon & Patti Galli
(Email: Kerriegonebirding@outlook.com Phone: 720-891-8771)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From Main St intersection in Parker, go south on Parker Rd (CO 83) for 1.2 miles.

Turn right on Indianpipe Ln and right into McCabe Meadows parking lot in Salisbury Park (Parker Regional Park).

We bird along the Cherry Creek Trail.

Bring binoculars, snack, water, sunscreen.

Possible birds include Bull-ock's Oriole, Violet-green Swallow, Western Kingbird, and sum-

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Last Month's Program: Fox Squirrel

Tim Johnson

From above, in the cool evening twilight of Monday, March 27, a few pair of Sciuran rodent eyes must have watched knowledgeable DFO members enter the DMNS to hear David Leatherman's presentation "Fox Squirrel: Cutest Devil on the Block."

David, with degrees from Marietta College in Ohio and Duke University, spent 31 years in the Colorado State Forest Service from 1974 to 2005. He has done what naturalists routinely deify but few accomplish: spend inordinate amounts of time observing in detail a small environment, while trying to make sense of what they find.

He has made about 1,700 visits to Grandview Cemetery in Ft. Collins, many involving encounters with our local fox squirrel subspecies *Sciurus niger rufiventer*. His talk included a number of personal observations, questions they posed, and abundant photographs.

Warning: this summary bears little resemblance to Dave's live presentation, which was hilarious as well as informative. One could wish there were a naturalist's equivalent of "Saturday Night Live." I picture Dave with Alec Baldwin in squirrel costume.

Dave began with some facts about fox squirrels, the most urban of Colorado's four squirrels (the other Colorado squirrels are Red or Pine, Rock, and Abert's). An eastern species, the fox squirrels' westernmost native extensions into Kansas and Colorado follow river corridors populated with cottonwoods. In Colorado it is likely native to the Platte and Republican River drainages but has been introduced elsewhere and is spreading to higher elevations.

Weighing on average 1–2 lb., its lifespan is 8–12 years in the wild. Usual population density is about 1 per acre, but can go about 5 times higher under optimal circumstances. Two litters of 2–3 young per year is the norm (but Dave thinks it can go higher). This allows a population to be sustainable even with 40% mortality/year.

They prefer to nest in holes dug out by woodpeckers: Northern Flicker, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers in low-elevation Colorado. They will evict these birds from nest holes, but also construct "drays" of interwoven cut branches with leaves, pasted together with grass or equivalent.

Dave documented that squirrels are extremely particular about the pasting material. It may be lined with bark strips, cut and torn off from bottom to top.

One of Dave's naturalist passions is food habits. Dave thinks of fox squirrels as fastidious, highly motivated, and intelligent foragers that actively pick and choose in an abundant urban environment.

Squirrels identify acceptable food mostly by smell, which is especially useful when retrieving cached food (they appear not to have well-developed spatial memory).

Backup food, present most of the year, are tree buds, which they will high-grade by clipping off small branches, eating the best buds, and tossing the remainder. Dave thinks (and documented) that by doing this, squirrels may deliberately shape trees to favor dray sites, since this pruning behavior may stimulate crown growth.

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LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, continued from page 6

In addition to solid tree food, including wound callus and phloem, they like “sapsicles” (frozen drips of sap), aphids, fungi, roadkill, and of course, birdseed. They are good at extracting insects from plant galls, and seeds from pods. Unusual foods include “sooty mold” that grows on the sugary secretion of scale insects and darkens trees; bird eggs and young birds; and even their own baby squirrels in hard times.

Dave has evidence that squirrels may monitor bird nests, to get maximum nutritional benefit by harvesting a nestling just before fledging. Squirrels themselves are preyed upon by Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned Owls, red foxes (Dave showed a picture sequence of a fox avoiding a squirrel’s razor-like claws), and Toyotas.

Now for the fun stuff! Dave showed an action-packed photo sequence illustrating how a dead squirrel decays over the course of 2-1/2 months; a squirrel cooling off by sprawling on a headstone in Grandview Cemetery; and suggested some squirrel-related online entertainment.

Try a Google search for “squirrel underwear” and “squirrel feeders.” I would suggest, in addition, “squirrel antics” and “squirrel girl.” My own favorite factoid, probably from Ripley’s Believe It or Not, is that the word “squirrel” is so difficult to pronounce for non-English speakers that it has been used to identify spies.



Fox squirrel carrying grass for “dray” construction in tree in Grandview Cemetery, Ft. Collins. *Dave Leatherman*

Field Trips

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mer visitors. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, May 14

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP.

From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir.

State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles.

Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly. Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional.

Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Deer Creek Canyon Friday, May 19

4:00 AM - 10:00 AM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet for car-pooling at the intersection of South Wadsworth and Deer Creek Road.

Park on the north side of Deer Creek Road which is just south of C-470.

A short morning outing with an early start for possible pygmy-owl (no promises) and the dawn chorus. We should hear Overbirds.

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Field Trips

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We visit forest, scrub, and riparian seeing a wide array of breeding and migrant birds.

Some birding along narrow mountain roads with some early commute traffic, and a few short hikes possible.

Bring snacks and drink. Restroom opportunities may be limited until after the first 2 hours so plan accordingly. **Register online or contact leader.**

Meyers Homestead Trail, Walker Ranch

Saturday, May 20

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Paula Hansley (Email: plhansley@gmail.com)
Phone: 720-890-2628)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the East Boulder Recreation Center at South Boulder Road and 55th Street.

Park at the west end of the main parking lot to assemble a car pool.

Meyers Gulch is part of Boulder County's Open Space system.

We will take a lovely trail (at about 7,300 to 8,000 ft elevation) through ponderosa pine, aspen, meadow, and small willow carr.

Bring lunch or good-sized snack, water, and sunscreen.

Smooth trail begins at ~7,000' and goes slightly upward through these habitats.

Look for nesting foothills species, such as Western Bluebird, Vesper Sparrow, Williamson's and Red-napped Sapsuckers, various flycatchers, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Hermit Thrush.

Register online or contact leader.

Parker Jordan Centennial Open Space

Saturday, May 20

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Cynthia Madsen & David Hill
(Email: cmadsen08@gmail.com)
Phone: 303-770-6534)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: (1) Go south on Parker Rd/CO 83 to E Broncos Pkwy, but DO NOT turn at the light.

Continue about 100 yds south of the light at E Broncos Pkwy and turn right onto a dirt road (mile marker 64).

Continue west into the Tagawa Garden Center parking lot. Follow the parking lot to the west exit.

Before you reach E Broncos Pkwy, take a short road to your left to parking lot where we will meet.

OR (2) From I-25, take Exit 197 east onto S Arapahoe Rd for ~3.5 miles to S Jordan Rd and then south to E Broncos Pkwy.

Follow E Broncos Pkwy east for ~0.5 miles. Just after crossing over Cherry Creek and Trail, there is a short road on the right just before you reach Tagawa Garden Center.

Turn right onto that road and turn right into the parking lot.

This will be an easy walk of 2.6 miles over flat terrain enjoying the birds of riparian habitat along Cherry Creek.

Bring binoculars, water, snacks.

Register online or contact leader.

Chico Basin Ranch

Sunday, May 21

6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mammershek@msn.com)
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: To carpool, meet at the King Soopers parking lot at 100 Founders Parkway (just east of I-25) in Castle Rock, CO.

One-day birding pass for Chico Ba-

sin Ranch is \$15 or \$10/individual when with a DFO group.

Bruce Neuman will assist with this trip. This is a fee area.

We need volunteers with high clearance vehicles to drive on ranch roads. Let leader know if you can drive.

Chico Basin Ranch is a working cattle ranch located in El Paso/Pueblo counties, southeast of Colorado Springs.

The driving distance from Castle Rock will be approximately 100 miles, a little over two hours.

The ranch will be birded by following the ranch roads in vehicles with stops to bird on level open areas such as ponds, wetlands, and grasslands.

This will be an all-day trip so please bring water and lunch. Scopes will be handy but not necessary. A two-way radio per car would be helpful.

We will bird until 4 p.m. and should be back at Castle Rock around 6 p.m. **Register online or contact leader.**

Roxborough State Park

Sunday, May 21

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Sue Summers & Wendy Wibbens
(Email: summerssue@hotmail.com)
Phone: 253-678-3721)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Take Wadsworth Blvd past Chatfield SP to Waterton Rd on left.

Take Waterton Rd 1.6 miles east to North Rampart Range Road. Turn right and go south 2.3 miles to Roxborough Park Rd.

Turn left (east) onto Roxborough Park Rd and then turn immediately right (south) on Roxborough Rd and follow signs to the Park (2.2 miles). State Parks pass or day pass required.

Bring binoculars, water, and

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Field Trips

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snacks. Lunch at the visitors center at noon for those who wish to join.

We'll walk several miles on well-maintained trails through scrub oak and grassland habitats.

Species list may include Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, White-throated Swift. **Register online or contact leader.**

Eastern Arapahoe and Adams Counties Tuesday, May 23 5:30 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Soopers parking lot.

Take I-70 east from Denver to the First Street exit and go north. Turn left on West Market Place Drive, then go right into the King Soopers lot.

We will travel the back roads in search of prairie breeders, shorebirds, and possible rare migrants.

This trip will be somewhat exploratory as the leader has limited experience in the eastern parts of these counties, but some nice birding is possible.

We will want to carpool from the meeting place. Restrooms may be limited at times. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain will probably cancel.

Check your email for updates on specific plans before trip day. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chatfield State Park Wednesday, May 24 5:00 AM - 10:00 AM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at swim beach by entering west entrance of park off S Wadsworth, 1.5 miles south of C-470. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This short early morning walk will focus on the gallery riparian forest of the South Platte upstream of Kingfisher Bridge.

Target birds include Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Red-eyed Vireo, American Redstart, Yellow-breasted Chat, and many House Wrens and Yellow Warblers.

Plan for a few miles of mostly level (but maybe muddy) walking. Waterproof footwear may be advisable. Bring a snack and drink. **Register online or contact leader.**

Sedalia to Cheesman for Woodpeckers Friday, May 26 6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Chris Blakeslee & Paul Slingsby (Email: ChrisABla@aol.com
Phone: 303-694-4670)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet the leaders at the U.S. Post Office in Sedalia.

Take Hwy 85 to Sedalia in Douglas County; turn southwest on Hwy 67; drive through Sedalia over 2 major sets of railroad tracks.

The U.S. Post Office is on the northwest (right) side of Hwy 67.

Sedalia, Douglas Co., to Cheesman Reservoir and Hayman Burn, Jefferson Co.

We will target 7 woodpecker species including American Three-toed and Lewis's, and other migratory and nesting mountain bird species.

Group will be off-trail walking in moderate terrain for a total of 1 to 2

miles with minimal altitude gain. We will be back in Sedalia by 4 p.m.

Bring lunch, water, and clothing for changeable mountain weather.

Register online or contact leader.

Meyer Ranch Park Saturday, May 27 6:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen Drozda (Email: drozforte@AOL.com Phone: 303-388-0891)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 South Eldridge St, Morrison.

If driving south on C-470, take the Quincy venue exit, turn right on Quincy Ave, then take left on West Tufts Ave.

If traveling north on 470, you will turn right onto W. Quincy after the exit, then take left on West Tufts Ave.

Home Depot sign can be seen from the highway.

We will meet at 6:45 a.m. at the Home Depot (open for restroom use).

We will arrange carpools and leave at 7 a.m. to drive to Meyer Ranch Open Space Park.

Expected species: Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cordilleran Flycatchers, vireos, Hermit Thrush, hummingbirds, Brown Creepers, woodpeckers, Vesper and Savannah Sparrows.

In the past, many of us have gone to a Mexican restaurant across the highway for lunch. We have collected additional species from the restaurant parking lot.

This is optional and we will arrange carpools accordingly.

PLEASE NOTE: You must begin the trip with the group at Home Depot no later than 7:30 a.m. No exceptions.

Bring snacks, water, appropriate

Continued on page 10

Field Trips

Continued from page 9

clothing, bug spray and sunscreen.

Register online or contact leader.

Beaver Brooke Trail

Sunday, May 28

6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Paul Slingsby (Email: paslingsby@comcast.net Phone: 303-422-3728)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the lower end of the Stegosaurus Park-n-Ride. We will carpool from there.

From I-70, exit 259, turn left onto CO 26; drive under I-70 bridge and look for the Park-n-Ride on your left.

We will carpool 6 miles to the trailhead.

This will be a slow walk of about 3 miles on smooth, fairly level trails with some unmaintained paths in aspen and ponderosa forests. Hope to find early signs of nesting birds.

Denver Mountain Parks has completely changed the trail system. We will have permission to enter the aspen forest now closed to hikers.

Please bring a sack lunch and water. **Register online or contact leader.**

Marjorie Perry Park Nature Reserve

Sunday, May 28

6:45 AM - 11:30 AM

Pratyaydipta Rudra & Sreemala Das Majumder (Email: pratyayr@gmail.com Phone: 919-699-4043)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at Castlewood Park, 5601 East Orchard Drive, Greenwood Village CO 80111.

It is at the intersection of south Holly Street and East Orchard Drive (not east Orchard Road).

This little preserve in the middle of urban developments can be surprisingly good.

The Highline Canal trail goes through the preserve.

We will look for summer residents and potential migrants. It has a mixed habitat, both songbirds and water/shorebirds are possible among migrants. Owls have been seen in the past.

We will walk up to 3 miles on easy trail. Bring plenty of water, snacks, sunscreen and your birding gear.

Scopes are not necessary, but could be useful if you have one.

Register online or contact leader.

Pinecliffe/Rollinsville/Moffat Tunnel East Portal

Sunday, May 28

7:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at CO-72 (Coal Creek Canyon Road) and Plainview Road.

From Golden go north on CO-93 for 13 miles and then turn west on CO-72. Go 1.7 miles west on 72 and turn right on Plainview Road. We will carpool from this parking lot.

First stop will be Pinecliffe to look for dippers and other mountain species.

Next stop in Rollinsville and then bird the 7-mile good gravel road to the East Portal of Moffat Tunnel.

At the tunnel we will hike the S Boulder Creek trail for a mile or two.

Bring water and lunch or snacks and dress for mountain weather.

Register online or contact leader.

—Scheduled by Chris Owens

DFO launches its first Big Month

DFO birders will have an action-packed month in May with the launch of our first Big Month.

Birders and guests will have 23 field trips to choose from covering most of the hot spots in a nine-county area, and we may add a Chase Trip or two.

Counties included in the Big Month are Adams, Denver, Boulder, Arapahoe, Jefferson, Clear Creek, Broomfield, Douglas, and Gilpin.

With the early nesting season overlapping the peak of spring migration, May is one of the favorite months for birders.

We urge you to join as many of these field trips as you can to help DFO build our big month total.

Our aim is simple: generate the biggest one-month species list we can on DFO field trips, while having more fun than we're entitled to.

Any species seen on a DFO field trip within the nine-county area will count toward the total.

Field Trip Committee member David Suddjian brought the idea to us from California.

The committee hopes you will all participate and enjoy the spring excitement.

Beginning the first week of May, you can check progress on our Big Month list on the web site at <http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/Reports/BigYear.aspx>.

New DFO promotional brochure to be distributed soon

DFO's new promotional brochure will be ready for distribution in early April.

Promoting the advantages of DFO membership, the piece is illustrated with color photographs of birds and birders in the field.

It was a collaborative effort between your board and volunteers. Many thanks to the contributing photographers and especially to Jim Esten for his layout and editing skills.

The brochures will be distributed to wild bird stores and other retail

and state park locations throughout the metro area as a point-of-sale promotion.

Please contact DFO Director Susan Blansett if you know of a retailer who caters to our target audience and will put it on display.

Join us!

Experience birds at a whole new level in their natural environment by joining DFO today. Go to dfobirds.org or scan the QR code below. (New members who join and pay after October 1 will have their membership extended through the following year.) Have questions? Use the "Contact us" form on the home page.

You'll find friendly people willing to share their knowledge and passion for birds. You'll see more birds, enhance your skill and make friends along the way!



© Tom Behnfeld



What do our members say about DFO?

"Every time I go birding I get a Christmas-present view of some special bird or bird behavior that is etched in my brain forever!"

"The young birders I've met through DFO are really terrific in the field! I'm always happy to see them at the meetings or on a field trip."

"The monthly DFO meetings never disappoint! The speakers are great – thought-provoking and entertaining."

"Our DFO-funded research into Flammulated Owls, Mountain Plovers, raptors and SO many other species is one of the key reasons I choose to belong to DFO."

"Best value for the money of any group I've joined!"

"I felt so at ease with the DFO trip leader! She and the other birders really took me 'under their wing' and made sure I got good looks at all the birds."

"Colorado has so many habitats and species to offer, and these folks know where to find them all!"



dfobirds.org



Denver Field Ornithologists
Bringing Birders Together



© James C. Esten

dfobirds.org

35th Annual Spring Bird Count, 2017

Everyone is welcome—just show up! More eyes spot more birds.

Friday, May 12

Barr Lake periphery, 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Dick Anderson (303-757-4582)

Meeting Place: On access road to entrance station at Barr Lake State Park

This trip does not involve much walking. Good for people with limited mobility or stamina.

Saturday, May 13

Waterton downstream, 6 a.m.

Leader: Urling Kingery (303-814-2723)

Meeting Place: At Audubon Center/Discovery Pavilion (left turn immediately after turning from Wadsworth (CO 121) onto Waterton\Roxborough Rd (4.4 miles south of C-470) and before the DOW parking lot for Waterton Canyon)

Wear long pants due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles, and knapweed. A 4 to 5-mile hike.

Chatfield State Park, 6 a.m.

Leader: Joey Kellner (303-978-1748)

Meeting Place: Swim Beach on west side. State Parks pass required.

Lower Bear Creek, 6 a.m.

Leader: Keith Hidalgo (720-201-0195), hidalgo@yahoo.com

Meeting Place: At 6 a.m. at new parking lot by Conoco station, C-470 and Morrison Road.

Count begins at Bear Creek Lake Park at 6:30 a.m. If you would like to go to Marston Lake later in the day, contact leader at least five days before count because of admission requirements set by Denver Water.

Barr Lake State Park, 6 a.m.

Leader: Christy Payne (810-294-2170), christylpayne@jacobs.com

Meeting Place: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. Exit I-76 at Bromley Lane; go east about ¼ mile and turn right (south) on Lark Bunting Lane to end of road. State Parks pass required.

Castlewood Canyon State Park, 6:30 a.m.

Leader: Tom Halverstadt (303-618-6730), thavs1@comcast.net

Meeting Place: At old entrance. From CO 86, 0.5 miles west of Franktown, turn south on Castlewood Canyon Road, go two miles to old entrance. State Parks pass required.

Sunday, May 14

Cherry Creek Reservoir, 6:30 a.m.

Leader: Cynthia Madsen (303-770-6534, 303-909-6930) cmadsen08@gmail.com

Meeting Place: At the marina on west side (near Cherry Creek High School) in Cherry Creek State Park. State Parks pass required.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal

Leader: Urling Kingery (303-814-2723)

Space limited; contact leader to register.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com
Vice President	Bob Shade	wrshade3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Kristine Haglund	kahaglund1@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Tina Jones (2017)	tjcalliope@hotmail.com
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Chris Rurik (2018)	chrisrurik@gmail.com
Ira Sanders (2017)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Karen von Saltza (2017)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
David Suddjian (2017)	dsuddjian@gmail.com
Lynn Willcockson (2017)	lynnliz2698@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Bill Wuerthele	wuerthel@ecentral.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Susan Blansett	admin@dfobirds.org
	Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Kay Niyo	kay@kayniyo.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Kay Niyo, editor, kay@kayniyo.com. Contact Kay Niyo with questions or comments: kay@kayniyo.com, 303-679-6646. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome, new members: Robert Engelbert, Littleton; Patricia Flood, Lakewood; Jane Haddock, Lakewood; Dawn Key, Elizabeth; Gloria McVeigh, Lakewood; Paula Bauer and Dale Pate, Littleton

Upcoming Speakers

Nathan Pieplow

"Mystery Owl of Mexico"

Apr. 25

(Note Tuesday Date)

Christian Hagenlocher

TBD

Aug. 28

Gemara Gifford

"Birds and Coffee"

Sep. 25

Scott Rashid

"Barn Owls"

Oct. 23

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 40 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Learning Subspecies

Ptarmigan Award Winner

First Big Month



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JUNE 2017/VOL 53 NO 6

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Delaney Community Farm Saturday, June 3

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

A.J. Gest (Email: offsetaj@comcast.net Phone: 303-994-2420)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Delaney Community Farm is on the east side of Chambers Road Between Alameda Ave and 1st Ave: 170 East Chambers, Aurora.

Look for the entrance just north of the Delaney Farm sign. Park in the lower parking lot near the corrals.

The combination of old cottonwoods, community gardens, mixed grass fields, and Toll Gate Creek provides great habitat for many songbirds.

Sparrows, nesting Red-tailed Hawks, woodpeckers, orioles, and several species of swallows are not uncommon.

Bring water, sunscreen, and a snack. Scopes are optional. Portable toilets should be available, but not guaranteed. There are public facilities in the Aurora Public Library.

The paths are easy walking, but not paved. The estimated distance by foot is 2.5 miles.

Register online or contact leader.

Continued on page 2

2nd Annual DFO Members Only Picnic 'Bringing birders and bratwurst together'

We hope that you will join some of your best "Birding Buddies" for a great day of fun and fellowship at the 2nd Annual DFO Members Only Picnic.

WHEN: Saturday June 17th
10AM for Birding; 11AM for the Picnic

WHERE: deKoevend Park - Shelter B [Click Here for a Map](#)
6301 S. University Blvd.
Centennial, CO 80121

RESERVE YOUR SPACE by June 14th [HERE!](#)

DFO has reserved a pavilion with covered seating and is providing bratwursts and drinks. A vegetarian option can be selected using the online form. The cost is \$5 per person (children under 12 are free) and we are asking that each adult bring a potluck item for 8 people as follows:

Continued on page 3



Susan Blansett at last year's Members Only Picnic. Debbie Behnfield

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Red Rocks Park

Sunday, June 4

7:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Alison Kondler (Email: BirdingByEar@msn.com
Phone: 303-904-9140)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Trading Post parking lot at Red Rocks Park. Call for directions if this location is unfamiliar to you.

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre is geologically amazing. Let's explore this unique landscape, find nesting birds, and learn to identify them by their sounds.

We will walk along Trading Post Trail which is 1.4 miles in length, and goes through spectacular rock formations, valleys, and natural meadows. Expect hill climbing with moderate effort.

Some possible bird species include: Peregrine Falcon, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Black-chinned and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Yellow-breasted Chat, Green-tailed Towhee, and much more.

Bring binoculars, water, and snacks. **Register online or contact leader.**

Upper Beaver Meadows Rocky Mountain National Park

Friday, June 9

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Bill Wuerthele (Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com
Phone: 303-333-2519)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead parking area. Travel to the Beaver Meadows Entrance Station of the park on Route 36. Annual or day park pass required.

To reach the trailhead, continue past the Entrance Station

Continued on next page

A seaworthy vessel, a bold course forward

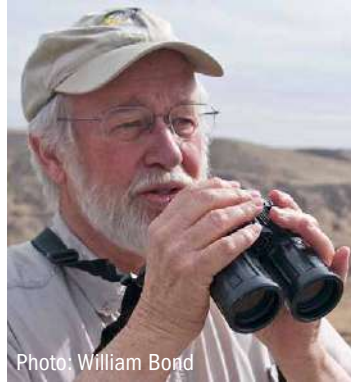


Photo: William Bord

by Chuck Hundertmark, President

Though the metaphor of a seaworthy vessel is a bit shopworn, it captures well the reasons that I enlisted for another term as president of DFO.

In the two years since I finished my previous tenure as president, the organization has made great strides under Joe Roller's leadership.

Joe has enumerated many of the accomplishments of the past two years elsewhere

in this newsletter. I want to highlight just a couple of those that led me to serve again as president. Foremost among them is the work of the Nominating Committee.

Early in his term, Joe recognized that building the leadership pipeline of DFO was crucial to the organization's continuing success. To accomplish that, he established the Nominating Committee as a standing committee operating year-round to recruit and screen members to assume the leadership roles needed for the club's viability.

Bill Wuerthele put his substantial energies into leading that committee. The committee has set high standards for its own work and has reached out to members who could bring needed talents and capabilities to the organizational side of DFO.

The result has been an influx of capable new board and committee members willing to put their talents and energy into serving current DFO members better and into reaching out to bring in new members. As we all do, they are building on the work of those who went before.

Another critical step in developing the leadership pipeline was the separation of the vice president position from the program chair position. To maintain continuity of leadership, it is vital that the vice president be learning presidential responsibilities and be ready to step in as president. A member with great talents bringing in programs may not want to jump into the role of president.

With these and other measures completed to enhance the seaworthiness of the DFO ship, Joe initiated the second DFO board planning retreat in 2016. Planned by Susan Blansett, the retreat generated a set of bold ideas for the future of DFO. Those ideas build on DFO's strengths and the interests of our members.

At the May 12 meeting of the board, we'll begin to flesh out the plan for making those ideas a reality. We'll be looking at broadening the birding options available to members with projects like our new citizen science offerings. We'll also be looking for ways to engage families and youth in DFO programs.

In the months ahead, we'll let you know more about plans to make these ideas a reality. I hope you'll find the plans exciting and discover places where you fit in. With such a great team and bold plans in place, I wanted to be involved.



Art Hudak, Bob Shade, and Pat O'Driscoll at last year's Members Only Picnic

PICNIC, continued from page 1

If your last name begins with:

A – H Please bring a Salad

I – Q Please bring a Side Dish

R – Z Please bring a Dessert

We'll have the grill fired up in time to serve lunch right around 11:45 a.m., so plan to arrive with your potluck item no later than 11 p.m. to allow time to get your item set out and find a place to sit. Even better, show up earlier and take advantage of the great birding opportunities that deKoevend Park and the nearby Highline Canal hold. Here are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- Unlike our monthly meetings and weekly field trips, this event is not "open to the public." You may bring along immediate family members or a "significant other." Encourage your friends who are not DFO Members to join DFO!
- We will be collecting \$5 per person at the picnic, so, please bring cash or check. No Credit Cards please.
- Bring a folding chair if you have one.

Park at either of the parking lots off University Blvd. Shelter B is southeast of the Assisted Living Facility by the Goodson Recreation Center. The DFO Member Picnic promises to be a fun time for all. We look forward to seeing you there!

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

on Route 36 for approximately 3/4 mile and turn left on a small road signed for Upper Beaver Meadows.

Continue to the end of the road and the small trailhead parking area.

This will be a loop hike of just under five miles with elevation gain and loss of approximately 800 feet.

We will begin on the Deer Mountain Trail and follow the Beaver Mountain and Ute Trails to complete the loop.

Participants should bring appropriate clothing for the season, including rain gear, and wear shoes appropriate for hiking on a rocky trail. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

We will travel through several habitats, including sagebrush/bitterbrush meadow, and ponderosa and lodgepole pine, with aspen groves scattered throughout.

Possible species include, Red-naped Sapsucker, Williamson's Sapsucker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, and Northern Goshawk.

The trip is planned for a weekday to avoid crowds. Carpooling to the park is recommended.

Register online or contact leader.

First Creek at Denver Open Space

Saturday, June 24

7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com)

Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

just before Pena on your left (north).

Or, take I-70 east to Pena Blvd. Drive north to 56th Ave Exit. Turn left at the light and at the bottom of the off ramp, pass under the highway and turn right, almost immediately, into the First Creek parking lot.

Since the city dedicated this 200-acre preserve in August 2016, First Creek @ DEN has become a year-round hot spot, with 125 species in less than 1 year.

Expect late spring migrants, returning summer birds, and plenty of raptors.

We'll walk the 1.5-mile creek path upstream to Tower Road and back, explore the wooded open-space meadow north of the creek, and watch for anything crossing the west fence from Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR next door.

Scopes may help with distant hawks, eagles, and unexpected visitors. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and bug spray.

If there's time, we'll walk an extra mile north on Buckley Road to try for Burrowing Owls.

Note: At present, there are no restrooms at First Creek. The closest are King Soopers and service stations off Tower Road (Green Valley Ranch). **Register online or contact leader.**

Aiken Canyon Preserve

Saturday, June 10

5:30 AM - 2:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com)

Phone: 303-588-0552)

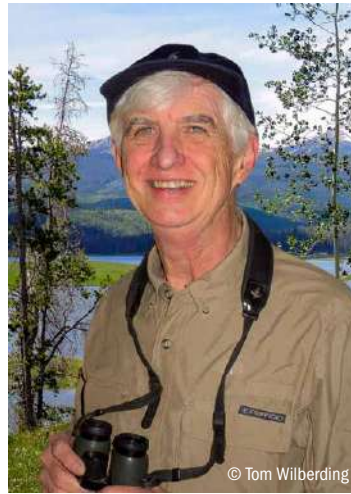
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave

Continued on next page

Looking back, moving forward!



By Joe Roller, Past President

When I became DFO president two years ago, my goal was to “put a shine on a great apple!” I am proud to review the DFO board’s many accomplishments since April, 2015.

Field Trip Program - Field trips are the beating heart of DFO! Today we have:

- More trained and certified trip leaders, with more field trips than ever.
- Overnight and weekday trips to new destinations.
- Expanded, hard-working Field Trip

Committee.

- Participants’ guide to getting the most from field trips created. *Better Birding with DFO* stresses friendly, cooperative, and safe birding.
- Annual Field Trip Leader Forum.
- Two citizen science projects begun.
- Two “Big Months” scheduled in 2017.

Fiscal Stewardship

- Finance Committee created to assist the Treasurer and plan for the future.
- Finances now use QuickBooks and we added stronger financial controls and reports.
- Dues were raised for the first time in twenty years to keep our budget balanced.
- Expenses are kept in check and our funds are in a federally insured checking account.
- The first ever DFO Financial Review was conducted and we plan to repeat it annually.

Communications - *The Lark Bunting* has been a bright star in the DFO firmament and continues to shine.

- Major enhancements were made to the DFO Website by Ann Johnson and Kay Niyo.
- Continuous quality improvements.
- A DFO Facebook page was started to share photos, fun, and growing participation.
- Ongoing professional archiving of all DFO documents and evening programs.
- *The Lark Bunting* and previous board minutes are now digitized and accessible.

Continued on page 5

PAST PRESIDENT, continued from page 4

Rebranding

- A new logo, “Lark Bunting, Singing on the Wing,” was commissioned and it appears on spiffy business cards, a DFO banner, and new trifold color brochures, not to mention *The Lark Bunting*, DFO website and Facebook.
- A new “purpose driven” Marketing and Public Relations Team was formed to “toot our horn” and get the word out.

DFO stands for the “Denver Friendly Ornithologists!”

- Member Picnic each June.
- DFO member and non-member survey; we listen to you.
- Strong evening programs with rising attendance are being videotaped for people unable to attend.
- Members and visitors are welcomed by greeters from the parking lot to the auditorium.
- “Big Year” scheduled in 2018.

Leadership Development

- The Nominating Committee now works year-round to identify potential leaders.
- New recruiting and vetting processes have been put in place.
- Interim appointments of Directors have strengthened board.
- Goals of board rotation and having a working board have been met.
- Non-board members have been enlisted to help get things done.

Governance

- Strengthened DFO bylaws and redefined some roles.
- Established succession plan for office of president.
- 2016 Board Retreat: Many good ideas were generated and are being implemented.

Conservation

- The Research, Education and Conservation grants program continues with generous member support for worthy projects.
- [Citizen Science](#) has taken off like a rocket!
- DFO provides leadership at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Conservation Roundtable.

What has been the result of all of these improvements, along with others over the past six years? Total membership is up, thanks to both retention of current members and attracting new members. There were 472 members at the end of 2016 and we’re on track to exceed that this year.

We continue to work on creating a Youth Program. It is a great idea and progress has been made, but much remains to be done.

Finally, I want to thank the DFO board, field trip leaders, and members for your strong support. Looking back, all of these developments helped put a shine on what was already a great apple. We can all be proud of DFO as we move forward.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

From the parking area, it is a 70-mile drive to the preserve. Bring snacks or a light lunch, water, sunscreen, and bug spray. Wear sturdy boots.

We will be walking/hiking a 4-mile loop trail with a possible excursion on a 3/4-mile trail that branches off into the canyon. The habitat is shrubland, pinyon-juniper, and mixed conifer woodlands.

Some target birds include Black-chinned Hummingbird and Juniper Titmouse.

Any participants from the Colorado Springs area can meet us at the preserve at 6:45 AM. E-mail the trip leader for directions. **Register online or contact leader.**

Eldorado Canyon State Park Sunday, June 11

6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Karen Drozda (Email: drozforte@AOL.com Phone: 303-388-0891)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Division of Wildlife on the east side of Broadway and 58th. We will carpool from there. Please have your State Parks pass if you will be driving. Day pass is \$8.

We will be hiking the Fowler and Goshawk Ridge trails. The trail parallels the steeply dipping Dakota Hogback and a recent burn area where Lewis’s Woodpeckers have nested.

Habitats range from Gambel Oak to open ponderosa pine forest.

Expect to see White-throated Swift, Lazuli Bunting, Western Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat,

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Green-tailed Towhee, and a variety of warblers. We will hike to the burn area where Lewis's Woodpeckers nest.

We will return to cars and drive a short distance to South Boulder Cherryvale Open Space. We can hope to see Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrows in this location.

Bring snacks, water, lunch, sunscreen, and bug spray. State Parks pass necessary for vehicles carpooling. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, June 11 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP.

From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd. to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles.

Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly. Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Northeastern Breeding Bird Trip Saturday, June 17 5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

Chris Goulart (Email: cgoulart001@comcast.net
Phone: 586-764-2126)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Continued on next page

Last Month's Program: *Cinereous Owl*

Dave Hill

Nathan Pieplow is the author of the newly published, *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America*. When he is not doing research on birds, he is a Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Nathan's talk at the April DFO meeting focused on his latest adventures in Mexico and on one particular bird in Mexico.

Nathan began his talk with an overview about how most of what we know about birds came to be. In the 19th century, ornithologists studied birds by shooting them, taking careful notes about the bird, and putting the specimen in a museum collection. By studying these specimens and field notes, scientists classified birds into groups creating a taxonomy.

Nathan then focused in on the specific bird he is interested in. The scientific name is *Strix varia*, a species with three subspecies: Northern Barred Owl (native to the Eastern United States), Mexican Barred Owl (native to Central Mexico) and Fulvous Barred Owl (native to Guatemala.)

With slides of owls, maps, and sound recordings, Nathan introduced us to all three of the subspecies. He described how the Fulvous Barred Owl ended up being classified as a separate species.

The most mysterious of the three is the Mexican Barred Owl. No one knew what its call was like. That prompted Nathan to go to Mexico and search for the bird.

He shared with us how he pinpointed likely habitats in the mountains of Mexico and, with his birding colleague Andrew Spencer, mapped out an itinerary.

They went to central Mexico, playing various owl calls, in hopes that something similar, but different, would reveal itself. They saw lots of interesting birds and heard Spotted Owls and Mottled Owls, but no new owl species.

On the last night of their trip they arrived in Rancho La Noria. Nathan described how he and Andrew hiked in the dark, playing calls and listening. They heard something different, but it was far away.

While moving toward the distant adult, a screeching juvenile revealed itself. It begged over and over, but the adult never approached. At 4:00 a.m. they returned to the same site and, just before dawn, while playing the previous night's recording of that distant adult, it flew in. Their cameras launched into action.

But that is only the beginning of a much longer story. At this point, there were three ideas about this owl:

It could be the Mexican Barred Owl, a subspecies of *Strix varia*. It could be its own species, *Strix sartorii*, what Steve Howell (author of *Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico*) calls the Cinereous Owl. Or, it could be a subspecies of *Strix fulvescens*, the Fulvous Owl.

Continued on page 7



Nathan Pieplow was the April program presenter.

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, continued from page 6

Nathan is confident that the image he and Andrew captured and the audio they recorded proves that this is a separate species—the Cinereous Owl.

A return trip to Mexico in 2016 continued the exploration. We were treated to images of many cool birds and insects and lots of tips about great birding sites in Mexico. But, no Cinereous Owls were found.

In January 2017, Nathan returned with his friend, Manuel Grosselet. They made 44 stops in 6 days, but not a single Cinereous Owl was discovered. This raised many questions.

Why are Cinereous Owls found only at Rancho La Noria, where up to 3 pairs have been reported? Why are Cinereous Owls not present in Mexico's pine forests, today?

Nathan plans to publish a paper outlining his ideas about this species. The Cinereous Owl appears to be critically endangered and Nathan suspects that some answers lie in habitat loss from logging and grazing. You can see and hear Nathan's talk by going to the [Past Programs](#) section of our website.

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund: Christie Tew, Robert and Allison Waters

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Directions: We will meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office at 6060 Broadway.

Take the 58th Street exit from I- 25 and drive 2 blocks west to Broadway. Go 2 blocks north on Broadway over the railroad tracts. The DPW offices are on the right (east) side.

We will be exploring North-eastern Colorado. Likely stops will include Tamarack Wildlife Area, Prewitt Reservoir, Enfield State Game Area, Red Lion State Game Area, and Jumbo Reservoir.

Target birds will be breeding Bell's Vireo, Field Sparrow, Great-crested Flycatcher, Northern Bobwhite, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal, and Baltimore Oriole.

We will be doing a very long drive so be prepared to be in the car for an extended period of time. Pack a lunch and dress in layers. **Register online or contact leader.**

**Staunton State Park
(Jefferson County)
Sunday, June 18
7:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Park-n-Ride at southwest corner of Hampden (CO 285) and Wadsworth to carpool to the park.

State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a moderate level hike with potential for short, steep inclines. We will hike 2-4 miles on either the Davis Ponds Trail or a portion of the Mason Creek Trail.

Continued on page 8

Field Trips

Continued from page 7

Habitat can include ponderosa pine, aspen, mountain riparian, meadows, and cliffs.

Species may include a variety of woodpeckers, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, kinglets, nuthatches, and raptors as well as migrants.

Our focus will be on observing bird behavior, analyzing field marks, and sounds.

Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, snacks, and sturdy hiking shoes; lunch optional.

All levels of birders welcome.

Register online or contact leader.

**Bailey Nesting Area,
Summit County
Wednesday, June 21
6:30 AM - 5:00 PM**

Paul Slingsby (Email:
paslingsby@comcast.net
Phone: 303-422-3728)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the lower end of the Stegosaurus Park-n-Ride.

From I-70, exit 259, drive south under I-70 and take the second left turn into the Park-n-Ride. We will carpool 65 miles from there to the Bailey Nesting Area.

The trailhead road is about 4 miles long and can be driven by most passenger cars. The trail is a moderately steep 4-wheel drive road with some off-trail walking.

We will walk less than 3 miles with minimal altitude gain.

We hope to see mountain nesting species and will likely find nests. Moose have been seen in this area.

Bring lunch and water. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on next page

DFO Annual Meeting minutes

by Kris Haglund

DFO President Joe Roller opened the April 25, 2017 annual business meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science Ricketson Auditorium and welcomed all members, new members, guests, and visitors.

Joe thanked the outgoing board members and those who are changing positions: long-time board members Tina Jones, Bob Shade, and Lynn Willcockson, who are leaving the board; Chris Rurik, who is moving to Alaska; and Kay Niyo and Kris Haglund, who are changing positions.

Joe explained that the slate of Officers and Directors presented at this meeting had been reviewed by the board and published in the March 2017 *Lark Bunting*. He then introduced Susan Blansett as the incoming Nominating Committee chair.

Susan remarked on the hard work that the committee had done in order to create a fully staffed board and expressed the committee's appreciation for those who agreed to stand for office. Susan then announced the committee's nominations:

Officers (1-year term of office)

President	Chuck Hundertmark
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Debbie James
Treasurer	Sue Summers
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger

Susan explained that the nominee for Vice President had needed to withdraw due to compelling personal reasons but that the Nominating Committee is continuing its search for a replacement. Susan moved and Peggy Gondar seconded that the DFO members present approve the slate of Officers as presented. The slate passed unanimously.

Board of Directors (3-year term of office)

Ira Sanders	Kris Haglund
Karen von Saltza	Sharon Tinianow
Bill Turner	

Susan moved and Karen von Saltza seconded that the slate of Directors be approved as presented. The slate passed unanimously. Kay Niyo is continuing on the Board of Directors through 2019.

Joe then introduced incoming president Chuck Hundertmark, who expressed his thanks to the members for the privilege of returning as president. He praised Joe Roller for all the work he did over the past two years to develop and strengthen the DFO as an organization.

Chuck particularly cited the October 2016 DFO Board Retreat, which resulted in many new and exciting ideas, including two citizen science projects: the Colonial Waterbird Nestwatch Project and the distribution mapping of the Warbling Vireo and the White-breasted Nuthatch subspecies.

He recommended going to [the website](#) and checking out the options.

Videos of DFO programs now available

by Kris Haglund

Did you ever wish you hadn't missed that DFO program you were dying to see? Or, did you wish you could hear a favorite presentation again?

Well, now presentations can be recorded thanks to the Audio-Visual staff of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (DMNS). Videos of presentations given by Chuck Hundertmark and Bob Stocker, Kevin Cook, Scott Somershoe, David Leatherman, and Nathan Pieplow are currently available.

Check them out [here](#). Click on the arrow symbol to the right of the program you wish to view, then scroll down to see the video. Enjoy!

Some programs cannot be recorded because they were not held in one of the DMNS theater venues. Some presenters decline to have their programs recorded. However, we look forward to bringing you many more DFO programs in this convenient format.



A Northern Parula warbler was spotted at Cherry Creek State Park in May. *Jim C. Esten*

Field Trips

Continued from page 8

Central Plains Experimental Range (CPER) near Pawnee Grasslands

Saturday, June 24

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Amber Carver (Email: caramb22@gmail.com)
Phone: 310-483-5721)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the CPER field houses. To get there from Denver, take I-25 north to Wellington (exit 278).

After exiting, turn right and then take an immediate left onto the frontage road. After half a mile, turn right on CR 64 (labeled as "Nunn Road").

After 11.1 miles, you will have reached the town of Nunn. Turn left on U.S. 85.

After 7.2 miles, turn right on CR 114. Take the first right (after 0.7 miles) down a dirt driveway toward a cluster of buildings.

Visit a grassland research facility and learn about current studies on shortgrass prairie birds.

The CPER is administered by the USDA Agricultural Research Service and is normally off-limits to the public.

You will visit pastures where grazing and bird productivity experiments are ongoing and you will see nesting McCown's Longspurs and Lark Buntings.

Other possible species include Burrowing Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, and Ferruginous Hawk.

A possible side-trip to the Pawnee National Grassland could yield Chestnut-collared Longspur and Long-billed Curlew.

We will do some walking on easy terrain, 1-2 miles total, and we will do some car birding.

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Field Trips

Continued from page 9

Bring sturdy walking shoes to protect ankles from cacti. Spotting scopes optional. Bring a sack lunch to eat at the CPER headquarters. **Register online or contact leader.**

Meyer Ranch Park

Sunday, June 25

6:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen Drozda (Email:

drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 South Eldridge St, Morrison.

If driving south on C-470, take the Quincy Ave exit, turn right on Quincy Ave, then take left on West Tufts Ave.

If traveling north on 470, you will turn right onto W. Quincy after the exit, then take left on West Tufts Ave. Home Depot sign can be seen from the highway.

This historic ranch property has been donated to Jefferson County and is now designated a mountain park.

You must meet the group at the Home Depot at 6:30 a.m. or at the Meyer Ranch parking lot at 6:50 a.m. No exceptions.

We can expect to see Warbling Vireos, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Savannah and Vesper Sparrows, Wilson's Snipe, hummingbirds, and Hermit Thrush.

If you like, we can eat lunch at a Mexican restaurant across Hwy 285 from Meyer Ranch. We have done this on past trips and it is great fun to get acquainted. Will carpool accordingly.

Bring sunscreen, bug spray, water, snacks, and appropriate clothing for inclement weather.

Register online or contact leader.

Denver Field Ornithologists: a tribute

By Bob Andrews

Co-author of *Colorado Birds*

Yekepa, Liberia, West Africa and the Denver area

Fifty years ago, this May, I participated on my first DFO field trip. I had been observing birds on my own for several years, mostly around the house, on family hikes and picnics, and independent rambles along Cherry Creek in southeast Denver.

But I had never been birding with another birder. Through the kind assistance of Dr. Alfred Bailey at the Denver Museum of Natural History, I connected with the Denver Field Ornithologists.

He put me in touch with Lynn Willcockson, who helpfully arranged for me to participate in the Barr Lake Spring Count. So, on a cold, gray, gloomy May 13, 1967, my father drove me out to Aurora to meet the group.

The trip leader was Lois Webster and the other two participants were long-time DFO stalwarts, Patty Echelmeyer and Bob Spencer. They were enthusiastic and encouraging companions and didn't even laugh when I made identification mistakes.

We headed up Tower Road, where we saw Burrowing Owls and Say's Phoebe. We stopped by the marshes on Bromley Lane, graced by a flock of White-faced Ibises.

Then on to the Mile High Duck Club, an amazing birding site that is, sadly, no longer available to birders. There I was mesmerized by the stunning American Avocets, Wilson's Phalaropes, and Long-billed Dowitchers.

The willows held many birds, including Common Yellowthroat, Lincoln's Sparrow, Veery and Northern Waterthrush. Off to the northeast, a shelter belt had a beautiful male Blackpoll Warbler and near Prospect Reservoir there were six species of swallows.

We headed back to Barr Lake, stopping along the way to see the amazing Red-headed Woodpecker. At Barr Lake, we walked in along the inlet canal, finding a Solitary Vireo (either Cassin's or Blue-headed) and a surprising Osprey (a great find in those days).

I marveled at seeing birds in life that I had only seen in a book. By the end of the day, my list was 91 species; I had no idea that one could see so many kinds of birds in one day. The life species for me totaled 42 species.

In 50 years of birding, around the US, in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, and eight countries in Africa, I have never since seen that many new species in a single day. It was an amazing and memorable day and one of the best in 50 years of birding!

DFO truly played a decisive role in helping me see and learn about birds on many field trips through the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, with many generous and patient teachers and mentors.

I write this as a tribute to the many people, past and present, who, through the DFO, provide great opportunities for many people to enjoy the fantastic birds of Colorado. May DFO continue to thrive!

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome new members: Katherine Blackett, Wheat Ridge; Mark Cary, Denver; Linda Doran, Broomfield; Chaya and Kenneth Finton, Arvada; Ruth Gabreski, Highlands Ranch; Sarah Kreider, Denver; Christie Tew, Highlands Ranch; Robert and Allison Waters, Aurora

Upcoming Speakers

Christian Hagenlocher

My Epic Big Year Aug. 28

Gemara Gifford

Birds and Coffee
Sep. 18
(Note new date)

Scott Rashid

Barn Owls Oct. 23

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated
Owl Research Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Bold Course Forward

Looking Back, Moving Forward

A DFO Tribute



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JULY 2017/VOL 53 NO 7

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Golden Gate Canyon State Park Saturday, July 1

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Paula Hansley (Email:
plhansley@gmail.com
Phone: 720-890-2628)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: From Denver, take Highway 93 on the west side of Golden. Just north of Golden, at a traffic light, go West on State Highway 46 (Golden Gate Canyon Road). Immediately, turn left into the parking lot on the south side of the road.

We will carpool to the Visitor's Center and explore the area by the lake. Then, we will head up to Bootleg Bottom and hike parts of the Coyote and Elk trails to visit ponderosa pine, aspen, and riparian habitats.

Expected species include both sapsuckers, all three nut-hatches, warbling vireos, various flycatchers, and other nesting montane species.

Bring lunch or snacks, water, and extra jacket. **Register on-line or contact leader.**

Mt Lindo Cemetery and Turkey Creek Park Sunday, July 2

7:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen Drozda (Email:
drozforte@AOL.com
Phone: 303-388-0891)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 South Eldridge St, Morrison. If driving south on C-470, take the Quincy Ave exit,

Continued on page 2

51 DFO birders log 193 species

During the month of May, 51 DFO birders took to the field to locate 193 species in seven Front Range counties. The effort was the bird club's first sally into a Big Month. Our goal was to see as many species as we could during a single month.

A whopping 24 field trips were scheduled during the month. All but two of them were within the 9 counties designated for inclusion in the Big Month. The 22 trips in Big Month counties were led by 18 different trip leaders, some leading two or more trips.

Though most wintering waterfowl (e.g. Greater White-fronted and Cackling Goose) were gone, migrating and resident waterfowl were well represented. Missing though, were Canvasback and Ring-necked Duck. Late were Common Loon and Horned Grebe.

Among the waders, most of the expected herons and egrets were represented, but Cattle Egret, Green Heron, and White-faced Ibis were missed.

Raptors were also well represented, including a Broad-winged Hawk. Notably absent were Northern Goshawk and Ferruginous Hawk. Shorebirds were more thinly represented, with slightly more than 50

Continued on page 3



Bonaparte's Gull seen May 1 at Aurora Reservoir. Meg Reck

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

turn right on Quincy Ave, then left on West Tufts Ave.

If traveling north on 470, you will turn right onto W. Quincy after the exit, then take left on West Tufts Ave. Home Depot sign can be seen from the highway.

We will leave the Home Depot parking lot at 7:30 AM. Restrooms are available inside Home Depot.

We will first travel to Turkey Creek Park. Expected species: warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers, possible American Dipper, and Gray Catbird. We will spend about 90 minutes in this location by the creek.

We will then travel to Mount Lindo Memorial Park. Gates for this park open at 9:00 AM. Expected species: Yellow-breasted Chat, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Wm. Sapsucker, and many other nesting birds.

Bring the usual water, snacks, appropriate clothing for variable weather, and bug spray. **Register online or contact leader.**

Rocky Mountain National Park (Larimer County)

Thursday, July 6

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Edmund J Holub (Email: edmund.holub@gmail.com
Phone: 303-979-2194)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the RMNP Visitor Center parking lot east of the RMNP Beaver Meadows entrance station on U.S. 36.

This is a THURSDAY trip to avoid congestion in the park. We plan to consolidate to 3 cars. You need a National Parks pass or plan to ride with someone who does have one.

We will make several stops

Continued on next page

Thinking (about birds) together

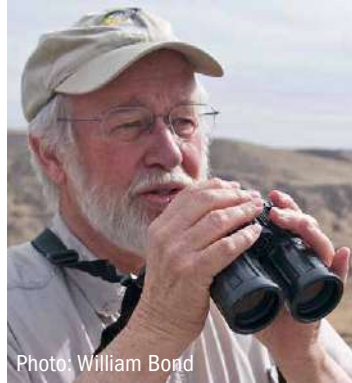


Photo: William Bord

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

“Humans are the most complex and powerful species ever; not just because of what happens in individual brains, but because of how communities of brains work together.”

—From *The Knowledge Illusion: Why We Never Think Alone*, by Steven Sloman and Philip Fernbach

In an article in a previous issue of *The Lark Bunting*, I examined the question, “What is a bird club?” treating it as a taxonomic question and concluding it is a form of organization *Nonprofitus avis-clubiae*.

That tells us something about the resource needs of a bird club, primarily people willing to serve as officers, directors, and committee members. But, it’s a little like defining a bird by looking at a study skin in a museum collection and concluding a bird is a collection of feathers held together by skin.

When we go into the field to find birds, we’re looking for more. We’re looking for living critters singing, displaying, fighting, raising young, and sky-dancing. We’re looking for descendants of dinosaurs displaying their colors, picking bugs from the undersides of leaves, or skulking in the brush to avoid predators. We’re looking for the life force beneath the feathers and skin.

So, what is the life force beneath the skin of a bird club? Sloman and Fernbach may offer the answer. In *The Knowledge Illusion* they argue that the distinctive characteristic of our species is our ability to share knowledge.

And that is what a bird club like DFO is all about. We are a gathering of people thinking together about birds. We share sightings, photos, and questions about birds. At monthly meetings, we listen to speakers who have paid attention to a particular aspect of the world of birds. The talks enrich our thinking about birds and raise new questions that we fire at the speaker or share with each other.

On field trips, we help each other spot birds or recognize them by sound. We share information about an individual bird or habitat. We challenge identifications and defend them. We learn from each other by answering questions, asking questions, and pondering aspects of bird life we hadn’t contemplated before.

At DFO, we think together about birds.

In the past two years, DFO has expanded the arenas for thinking together. The annual picnic provides an opportunity for more informal conversations about birds and our bird club. This year, two citizen science projects provide new ways to explore the world of birds. On the drawing board are even more ideas for opening our neural pathways into the world of birds.

When we think together about birds, we’re smarter than when we think alone.



Western Tanager seen May 6 at Prospect Park in Wheat Ridge. *John Breitsch*



The Common Loon seen May 1 at Aurora Reservoir. *Meg Reck*

BIG MONTH, continued from page 1

percent of potential migrants accounted for. Offsetting some missing species was the less-expected Red-necked Phalarope.

Though most winter gulls had moved on, a lingering Lesser Black-backed Gull augmented the usual mix of migrants and residents.

Though Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

with fairly easy walking, but at altitude. Possible birds are Mountain Bluebirds, Golden-Crowned Kinglet, Lincoln's Sparrow, woodpeckers, including Williamson's Sapsucker, and flycatchers.

Bring water, snack, raincoat and lunch. **Register online or contact leader.**

Mt. Falcon Park (Jefferson County)

Saturday, July 8

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email:

jbreitsch@hotmail.com

Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at upper parking lot of west side of Mount Falcon Park. From C-470 and U.S. 285 South, turn right at the Indian Hills exit to Parmalee Gulch Road.

Follow Parmalee Gulch Road for approximately 2.5 miles to Picutis Road, turn right at Picutis, then follow the signs for Mt. Falcon to the upper parking area.

We will explore ponderosa pine woodland habitat for nesting birds. We could see Cordilleran Flycatcher, Dusky Grouse, Plumbeous Vireo, Mountain and Western Bluebird, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Western Tanager.

Bring hat, sunscreen, bug spray, lots of water, snacks, binoculars, scope (optional).

There is an early starting time of 5:00 AM for anyone that doesn't want to sleep in. We'll do a quick loop around as it gets light and then we get to do it all again when the rest of the group arrives. **Register online or contact leader.**

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Field Trips

Continued from page 3

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, July 9

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly.

Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Rocky Mountain National Park (Larimer County)

Monday, July 10

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger & Candice Johnson (Email: mcburger3@juno.com Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the RMNP Visitor Center parking lot east of the RMNP Beaver Meadows entrance station on U.S. 36.

This is a MONDAY. This will be a 3/4 to all-day trip to Rocky Mountain National Park, depending on the weather and birds.

We will consolidate cars at the Visitor's Center. Either you need a National Parks pass or plan to ride with someone who does.

Bring lunch and clothes for changeable weather. We will

Continued on next page



Willet seen May 1 at Cherry Creek State Park. Meg Reck

BIG MONTH, continued from page 3

Burrowing Owl all showed up to be counted, Eastern Screech-Owl and Long-eared Owl eluded our counters. Among the expected woodpeckers, all were accounted for including the Lewis's, Red-headed, and Northern Three-toed. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, however, did not show up.

Among flycatchers, two montane species, Hammond's and Ashthroated, were missing. On the other hand, birders scored a phoebe trifacta, with Black, Eastern, and Say's. Among vireos, the Red-eyed was a good find, but Yellow-throated and Cassin's were missed.

Good finds among the warblers were Ovenbird, American Redstart, and Blackpoll. Missed were a handful of migrants, including Northern Waterthrush and Orange-crowned Warbler.

To date this year, boosted by the Big Month, DFO field trips have recorded 252 species. Since DFO began reporting in eBird, our top year was 2016 with 264 species recorded. Our current tally puts us in good position to top that number.

Of the nine counties originally planned for the Big Month (Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Gilpin, Clear Creek, Jefferson and Douglas) all but Broomfield and Clear Creek were covered by at least one field trip. You can find the final Big Month tally on the [DFO web site](#). Look for information on our next Big Month effort in the August issue of *The Lark Bunting*.

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund: Randall Nelson

Recommended reads

As the lazy days of summer approach, a good book can be a great investment. Books about birds cover a variety of topics, from those focused on a specific species, to those that focus on relationships between species. You will find books to improve your birding skills and books about the clean-ups that follow environmental disasters.

Here are some recommendations from members of the DFO leadership. If you have a favorite, post it on our [Facebook page](#).

Hawks from Every Angle: how to identify raptors in flight, by Jerry Liguori (2016.) This is a must-have guide for anyone who wants to ID raptors on the wing. Very helpful for understanding various morphs and adults vs. immature birds. Recommended by Susan Blansett.

Kingbird Highway: the biggest year in the life of an extreme birder, by Kenn Kaufman (2006.) This was probably the most impactful book when I was a beginning birder. It struck the chord of an era in birding and American history when young and poor underdogs felt like they could alter the course of things by just going and doing. Recommended by Chris Rurik.

Continued on page 6



Great Horned Owl; Full camouflage mode; Chatfield Farms, Littleton; Late January 2017. Chris A. Blakeslee

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

make several stops with easy to moderate hiking.

Possible birds are Mountain Bluebird, Lincoln's Sparrow, flycatchers, and woodpeckers, including Williamson's Sapsucker. **Register online or contact leader.**

Staunton State Park (Jefferson County)

Friday, July 14

6:45 AM - 2:00 PM

Chris Gilbert & Rebecca La-roche (Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com Phone: 804-214-1508)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Take U.S. Highway 285 south to Shaffers Crossing, about 6 miles west of Conifer. Turn north on Elk Creek Road and follow the signs 1.5 miles to the park entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Meet on the road just outside the gate, which opens at 7 AM. We will go immediately to the Group Picnic area, which provides parking just past the entrance station.

We will explore one of Colorado's newer state parks. Staunton offers a diversity of conifer forests and riparian habitats.

We will hike about 5-7 miles, part of which will require some steep uphill (weather depending).

Bring raincoat, water, snacks, lunch, hat, sunscreen, and bug spray. **Register online or contact leader.**

Beaver Brook Trail

Saturday, July 15

6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Paul Slingsby (Email: paslingsby@comcast.net Phone: 303-422-3728)

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the lower end of the Stegosaurus Park-n-Ride. We will carpool from there.

From I-70, exit 259, turn left onto CO 26; drive under I-70 bridge and look for the Park-n-Ride on your left. We will carpool 6 miles to the trailhead.

This will be a slow walk of about 3 miles on smooth, fairly level trails with some unmaintained paths in aspen and ponderosa forests. Hope to find early signs of nesting birds.

Denver Mountain Parks has completely changed the trail system. We will have permission to enter the aspen forest now closed to hikers.

Please bring a sack lunch and water. **Register online or contact leader.**

Park County Reservoirs

Saturday, July 15

6:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Mary Geder & Chris Blakeslee
(Email: mfg5000@live.com
Phone: 303-986-6127)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at RTD Park-n-Ride at C-470 and University Blvd. Exit C-470 and drive one block south to Dad Clark Drive. Turn right (west) to the parking lot entrance on the west perimeter.

The group will meet in the southeast corner of the lot easily visible from the road.

Join us for a day of searching for birds in the mountains. We'll visit the Bailey Heronry, Kenosha Pass ponds, and other spots with good birding potential for mid-July.

We hope to see various woodpeckers, flycatchers, humming-

Continued on next page

Eye of the Albatross by Carl Safina (2003.) It's the remarkable story of Amelia, a Laysan Albatross nesting on Tern Island in the northwest Hawaiian chain. You'll find yourself engrossed in her journey and rooting for her success while learning all about the natural history of a truly magnificent species and their environs. Recommended by Sue Summers.

The great penguin rescue: 40,000 penguins, Dyan Denapoli (2010.) This is the account of a devastating oil spill and the inspiring story of the world's largest animal rescue. It gets quite technical and tedious at times but is an interesting look at what it takes to mount a large rescue operation. Recommended by Kay Niyo.

H is for Hawk, by Helen McDonald (2015.) This is a memoir of a young woman who adopts a goshawk after the death of her father. Set in England, the reader learns a great deal about the goshawk through the woman's struggle to form a bond with a fierce predator. Recommended by Sharon Tinianow, *Lark Bunting* editor.

Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds by Scott Weidensaul (2000.) This a very thoughtful, beautifully written collection of essays on migration. I reread it every other year. Recommended by Karen von Saltza.

Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds: Notes from a NW Year, by Lyanda Lynn Haupt (2004.) This is an excellent read. I found a note in the book on a book mark saying "To the next reader: This book is terrific as are her other two." Recommended by Kay Niyo.

The Genius of Birds by Jennifer Ackerman (2017.) This is a well written expose for the non-scientist, as well as biologists, about the amazing adaptations birds have made to live and thrive in their environment. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in bird behavior and bird intelligence. Recommended by Karen von Saltza.



Western Screech-Owl; Along Arkansas River, Cañon City, Fremont County; February 18, 2017. Chris A. Blakeslee

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

birds, and warblers. We may find some family groups foraging with young.

This is an all-day trip. Bring lunch and clothing for changeable mountain weather.

Riverside Cemetery/Platte River (Denver County)

Sunday, July 16

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Kevin Corwin (Email: kevygudguy@aol.com
Phone: 720-482-8454)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Entrance is at 5201 Brighton Blvd in Denver. Gates open at 8 AM.

If you arrive before the gate is unlocked, do not park on or near the railroad crossing at the cemetery entrance. In the cemetery, we will park on the west side of the office building.

We will wander the paths of the cemetery and check its wetlands and woodlands, then exit the back gate to the river.

We'll walk along the riverside path to Northside Park and Heron Pond Wildlife Refuge where we'll check the pond and fields, then retrace our steps back to the cemetery.

Basic restroom facilities are available in a shed on the east side of the office building.

Bring water, snacks, and footwear for dirt or mud paths. Scopes optional. **Register online or contact leader.**

Chatfield State Park

Tuesday, July 18

5:30 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet for carpooling at the intersection of S.

Wadsworth and Deer Creek Rd. Park on the north side of Deer Creek Rd., which is just south of C-470. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will pick two or three areas to explore on foot, with about 4 miles total walking. Breeding birds will be in good numbers and early migrants may be around. July is often neglected, but it can be an interesting time.

Bring snacks and drinks in a day pack. Wear footwear for hiking. We will encounter poison ivy. **Register online or contact leader.**

Mt. Evans area (Jefferson and Clear Creek Counties)

Friday, July 21

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Lynn Willcockson (Email: Lynnliz2698@aol.com
Phone: 303-757-7000)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Fillius Park shelter house. Take I-70 west to exit 252 to Evergreen Parkway (Hwy 74). Go 2.5 miles to the first traffic light and turn right into Fillius Park.

We will arrange carpools for the 10-mile drive toward Mt. Evans.

Once in our carpool groups, we will drive through a variety of bird-rich habitats and we will make numerous stops.

We will take easy strolls, including Echo Lake and Summit Lake. Summit Lake is at 12,800-foot elevation.

In the past, we have seen many nesting birds including Pine Grosbeaks, Wilson's Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, Brown-capped Rosy-finches, and Pipits. Mountain Goats may be seen.

Dress for changeable weather.

Bring lunch, water, snacks, and sunscreen. **Register online or contact leader.**

Staunton State Park

(Jefferson County)

Saturday, July 22

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Take U.S. Highway 285 south to Shaffers Crossing, about 6 miles west of Conifer. Turn north on Elk Creek Road and follow the signs 1.5 miles to the park entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will meet at the Mason Creek parking lot of Staunton State Park. After the entrance station, take an immediate right and go a short distance south.

Mason Creek Trail is a moderate level hike with some steep inclines. We will hike about 2-4 miles.

Bring binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, snacks, and sturdy hiking shoes.

Habitat can include ponderosa pine, aspen, mountain riparian, meadows, and cliffs. We may see woodpeckers, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, kinglets, nuthatches, and raptors. **Register online or contact leader.**

Optional earlier hike at Reynolds Park - 5:00 AM meeting time.

From Hwy 73 in Conifer, CO, travel south on US-285 South for 0.3 miles, take slight right onto Kennedy Gulch Rd for 0.1 mi. Take the first left toward S. Foxton Rd. Turn left onto S Foxton Rd (Hwy 97) for 5.6 mi to Reynolds Park at 14070 S Foxton Rd.

If you join this hike, we will

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Field Trips

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start out in the dark. There are steep, narrow trails. We will take a loop route up to the top and back. This portion of the trip is strenuous.

This hike will have a small species list, but with luck could include Dusky Grouse, Williamson's Sapsucker, and Golden-crowned Kinglet, among others.

Morrison Nature Center at Star K Ranch Sunday, July 23 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

A.J. Gest (Email: offsetaj@comcast.net
Phone: 303-994-2420)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Located south of I-70 on Smith Road between Chambers and Airport Blvd. Address 16002 E. Smith Road.

We will be birding in a riparian system. We should see a variety of birds such as Black-capped Chickadees, songbirds, woodpeckers, and raptors.

Bring snacks, water, and binoculars; scopes are optional. Portable toilets on site. **Register online or contact leader.**

Banner Lakes SWA (Weld County)

**Saturday, July 29
7:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the wildlife area for a half-day trip. Take I-76 east; at the Hudson exit (exit 31), go four miles east on CO 52.

The main parking lot is on the left (north) just past CR 53 (Delorme 31 D6).

We will bird both the north and south sides of the area. There

are numerous small to medium sized ponds, marshes, Russian olives, and junipers.

There is moderate on- and off-trail hiking of about 2 to 3 miles. Scopes would be helpful but not necessary. Potential for a hawk/owl search of the DIA loop in the afternoon. **Register online or contact leader.**

South Platte Park Sunday, July 30 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the south end of South Platte Park near C-470. From C-470 take the Platte Canyon Rd/South Platte Park exit.

From Platte Canyon Rd at Depew Street turn southeast onto the entrance road for South Platte Park. Continue past a 90-degree left turn and the first parking lot, and meet in the second parking lot.

This is an eBird mobile training field trip. You will need a smart phone and you need to set up an account with eBird and download the app to your phone.

On this trip you will learn the many tricks and tips to easily record your bird sightings in the field, then seamlessly submit them to your My eBird account.

Join the growing number of birders that now use this great tool to record their birds and participate in Citizen Science projects. **Register online or contact leader.**



Male Bald Eagle near nest; Marston Reservoir, Denver County;
Early February 2017. *Chris A. Blakeslee*

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome new members: Taina Brin, Denver; Ray Gutin, Englewood; Adelia Honeywood, Brooklyn; Sherri Karaian, Albuquerque; Rita Klees, Boulder; Barbara Nash, Wheat Ridge; Randall Nelson, Parker; and Kirsten Ruppel, Evans

Upcoming Speakers

Christian Hagenlocher

My Epic Big Year Aug. 28

Gemara Gifford

Birds and Coffee
Sep. 18
(Note new date)

Scott Rashid

Barn Owls Oct. 23

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated
Owl Research Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Big Month

Thinking Together

Recommended Reads



The Lark Bunting

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[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://DFOBIRDS.ORG)

Field Trips

North Park

Saturday, August 5

12:00 PM - 12:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark & Paul Slingsby (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet the leaders at the Moose Visitor Center, CO Hwy 14, at 12 noon. **This is an overnight trip.** Plan to stay in the town of Walden on August 5.

Leaders recommend the North Park Inn and Suites or Chedsey Motel. We suggest making reservations early. North Park can be busy in summer.

Our primary goal will be to find migrating shorebirds. We'll also look for breeding birds with young, particularly waterbirds and colonial nesters like ducks, grebes, and pelicans. Scopes will be helpful.

Bring lunch for the first day, sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on page 2

Reminder: DFO membership meetings begin again on August 28. Look for more details on the website and in the next issue of *The Lark Bunting*.

Another DFO Big Month set in September

September is a great month for birding, so we might as well "Go Big"! DFO is advancing toward a Big Year in 2018, when all bird species encountered on DFO field trips in the nine-county Denver Metro Area over the whole year will ring up to one great annual total.

But first, we continue to test the waters with two Big Months in 2017. Our first effort in May was a great success. We found 193 species in the nine-county area while sharing many fun times together in the field. September is our next opportunity!

May is, of course, ripe with migrants and returning breeders. Birds are singing, relatively easy to find, and spring storms can produce unexpected results. But what about September? Although warmer and probably drier than May along the Front Range, September is also a great month for migrants and rarities.

Continued on page 3



Snowy Egret chicks, City Park, June 25. Pat O'Driscoll

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Friday, August 11

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com
Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO, located on the SW corner of Main St and 20 Mile Rd for birding there and later at the Rueter-Hess Reservoir, which is open to the public only with entry permission.

Our guest leader for this trip is Tim Ryan of Parker Water Dept.

We will first bird at the Barr CCC Park in Parker, which is next to Cherry Creek, to check for riparian birds.

The next stop will be Rueter-Hess Reservoir, Parker Water Department's new reservoir not yet open to the public. There we could see grassland species and waterfowl.

Bring binoculars, snacks, water, sunscreen, and a scope, if you have one. **Register online or contact leader.**

Belmar Historic Park

Saturday, August 12

7:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet in the parking lot near the lake. Belmar Historic Park is at 800 S Wadsworth Blvd in Lakewood.

From Alameda and Wadsworth go south on Wadsworth, turn west at the light on West Ohio Ave. Drive a short two blocks to the parking lot.

Bring snacks, water, and sunscreen for an easy walk around

Continued on next page

Synergy: when 1 + 1 = 3

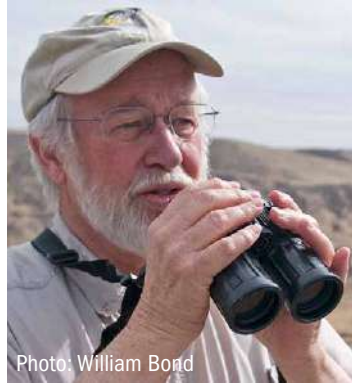


Photo: William Bond

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

beers" of the Olive-sided Flycatcher. Songs of most birds, however, are more like that of the Dusky Flycatcher, defying easy rendering in letters or phrases.

The National Geographic *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* renders the phrases of this bird's song as *sillit*, *grrreep*, *pweet*. David Allen Sibley, in his field guide, suggests *sibip*, *quwerrrp*, *psuweet*. Neither rendering is very helpful unless you can pair the phrases with the actual elements of the Dusky Flycatcher song.

In the 1960s, the Golden *Birds of North America* attempted to address the challenge by including sonograms with each species account. Sonograms are the graphic tracks of the bird songs over time. For most birders, however, sonograms are meaningless without an explanation.

Pieplow's field guide remedies that shortfall by showing us how to read a sonogram. Then, using sonograms for illustration, he provides a basic language for describing bird sounds.

It is that language and the hints on reading sonograms that aided Paul and me in the field. We were paying attention to the songs of warblers which sometimes can be as devilishly difficult as some empidonax songs.

What was especially productive was using Pieplow's language and hints in conjunction with the *Warbler Guide App*. This smartphone app is derived from *The Warbler Guide* by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle.

The *Warbler Guide App* provides several variations of the song of each North American warbler. Recordings are accompanied by a sonogram for each song.

Along branches of the Michigan River in Jackson County, Paul and I used the app to tease out the songs of MacGillivray's Warblers and Northern Waterthrush. From Pieplow's work, we found a common language to talk about series of notes and number of phrases.

For example, MacGillivray's Warbler most often sings a song with two or three phrases. Each phrase is a series of repeated notes. At one point, we heard a new song of a single series of emphatic notes. Suspecting it was also a MacGillivray's we could check the *Warbler Guide App* and find that the Mac Warbler indeed has a one phrase song.

So far, Nathan Pieplow's *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America* has received far less attention than it deserves. Perhaps that is because there is so much packed into the guide that it is hard absorb in a short time.

This summer, I had the chance to put a few of the concepts from Pieplow's work to use in the field while birding with Paul Slingsby.

One of the big challenges working with bird song is finding a common language. A few songs lend themselves to recognition with a useful mnemonic like the "quick three

Continued on page 3



Trio of Black-crowned Night-Heron chicks, City Park, June 25. Pat O'Driscoll

BIG MONTH, continued from page 1

In an absolute sense, there might even be more birds to encounter, as there are simply more birds in existence following the successes of the nesting season. But birds may be less obvious in the fall, without as much singing going on. And some plumages are subtler.

On the other hand, young birds in their first migration have a way of turning up in odd spots and many vagrants or rare migrants may be spotted. We also have better options for visiting higher elevations than we did in May, so maybe some montane specialties will be within our grasp.

September's field trips will employ careful planning to make sure we put ourselves in the path of migrants and that we visit those certain spots that will attract shorebirds and other water birds at the end of summer. There will undoubtedly be some rarities, including some we discover for the first time on DFO trips, and we may opt to chase some birds.

What about a species goal for September? We found 193 in May, so let's aim for 200 in September! Join our DFO field trips, lend your ears and eyes, and enjoy the fun, relaxed challenge of our Big Month.

It will be a great opportunity to visit some new places and enjoy the camaraderie of DFO birders. Whatever the numeric outcome, we are sure to learn to appreciate our birds more.

PRESIDENT, continued from page 2

Pieplow's book is not a quick read. It takes time to study and apply. Working with warblers is not a bad place to start. Using Pieplow in conjunction with the *Warbler Guide App* may prove that one plus one sometimes adds up to more than two.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

the ponds. A good trip for beginners and accessible for persons with a disability. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, August 13

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza & Bill Wuerthele (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles.

Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly. Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

First Creek at Denver Open Space

Saturday, August 19

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

Or take I-70 east to Pena Blvd. Drive north to 56th Ave Exit.

Turn left at the light and at the bottom of the off ramp, pass under the highway and turn

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

right, almost immediately, into the First Creek parking lot.

We'll look for summer residents and signs of early migration. If the creek is flowing, expect riparian- cottonwood prairie species.

We will walk 1.5 miles of paved path along the creek upstream to Tower Road and back.

We'll also cover at least one-half mile of Buckley Road, a closed pedestrian-bicycle strip along Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR's east boundary fence.

And, we'll check First Creek's north meadows, cottonwood groves, and prairie dog town for raptors and more.

Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, hat and bug spray

NOTE: No restrooms yet at this location. Closest facilities are on Tower Road (Green Valley Ranch King Soopers). **Register online or contact leader.**

Eastern Boulder County

Sunday, August 20

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Ira Sanders & Tammy Sanders
(Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: From northbound U.S. 36 take Foothill Parkway exit. Go north 2 miles to Arapahoe Ave., then east to 75th Street.

Go north on 75th Street past Valmont Road and the railroad tracks. Turn left at Wildlife Habitat sign. Follow the road west and south to Cottonwood Marsh parking lot.

This is a 3/4-day trip to explore the many ponds and lakes in eastern Boulder County during fall shorebird migration.

Bring lunch, water, bug spray,

Continued on next page

Birders 'n' brats, but not so many birds

by Patrick O'Driscoll

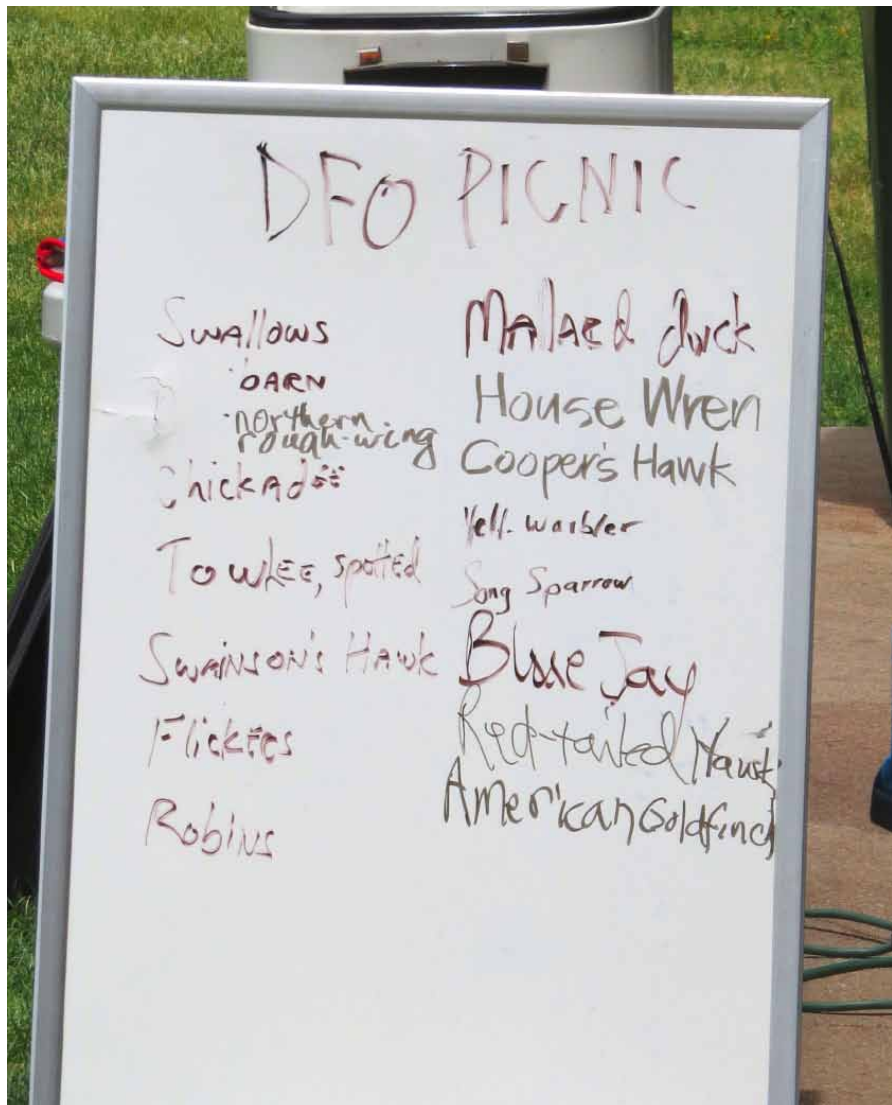
Dozens of birders "brat" along their appetites to a food-field trip at the 2nd annual DFO "Members Only" Picnic on a mid-June Saturday at deKoevend Park in Centennial.

The bratwurst were hot, the drinks cold, the side dishes cool, and the company warm, as about 60 club and family members gathered on June 17 beneath Shelter B in deKoevend, a tree-lined greensward in south metro Denver.

Between two-alarm fires at twin picnic grills (manned by grillmaster Mark Amershek and deputy undersecretary of charcoal Patrick O'Driscoll) and a groaning board of potluck salads, side dishes, and desserts (including ice cream courtesy of Melissa Smith and Pixie Wigfall), absolutely no birder went away peckish.

Picnic coordinator Tom Behnfield saw to that, with stalwart help from his

Continued on page 5



Whiteboard tally of bird sightings before lunch. Pat O'Driscoll

PICNIC, continued from page 4

wife and fellow birder, Debbie. The Behnfields procured scores of bratwurst and a couple of packages of veggie dogs, along with buns, condiments, and beverages galore. Debbie also had the great good sense to bring folding signboards to post at the park's east and west pedestrian entrances to point the way to the picnic grounds.

DFO President Chuck Hundertmark and immediate Past President Joe Roller were seen mingling among the picnickers. Others in attendance included longtime DFO member Bob Spencer Sr., who was spotted wheeling around the park after the picnic in another quest for a longer eBird list.

Tucked between the Highline Canal and Dry Creek, deKoevend was something of a hot spot for interesting bird sightings earlier in the spring. But with the late-spring heat and the drying up of the canal, DFO birders were hard-pressed to come up with even 20 species on informal outings around the park before lunch.

Continued on page 6



Some of the picnickers 'round the table. Pat O'Driscoll

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

and a scope, if you have one.

Register online or contact leader.

Guanella Pass

Saturday, August 26

6:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Wendy Wibbens & Sue Summers (Email: wibbwj@aol.com
Phone: 303-330-1175)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: We will be exploring stops along the road between Grant and the top of Guanella Pass.

We will depart from the Twin Forks Park-n-Ride, 6164 US Hwy 285. Going south on US 285, the Park-n-Ride is on the left just past S. Turkey Creek Rd.

We will encounter a variety of habitats including coniferous forests, mixed forest, willow carr, subalpine and alpine regions. We may take short walks up to 1-2 miles at high altitude.

Bring water, snacks, lunch, sunscreen, insect repellent, and clothing layers. Wear sturdy shoes for walking.

We will be looking for sparrows, flycatchers, woodpeckers, and perhaps the elusive ptarmigan.

Register online or contact leader.

Cobb Lake, Timnath Res, and Lory SP

Saturday, August 26

7:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Francis Commercon (Email: siskinbyderailleur@gmail.com
Phone: 303-470-9130)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at 7 AM in the SW corner of the Moby Arena Parking Lot on the CSU campus, Fort Collins.

We will try to carpool to minimize the number of cars. From Denver take I-25 north to Prospect Road, exit 268. Drive

Continued on page 6

Leadership opportunities with DFO

The Nominating Committee (Susan Blansett, chair) is actively seeking qualified candidates for Vice President.

In addition, a new Communications and Outreach Committee (Pat O'Driscoll, chair) has been formed

to more effectively communicate about birding and DFO.

If you are interested in either of these, contact information for the chairpersons can be found in the directory on the back page.

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

west on Prospect until you turn north on Shields St, then drive to Elizabeth St where you will turn east directly into the Moby Arena Parking Lot. State Parks pass required.

We will begin at Cobb Lake SWA where we will look for a variety of migrating sparrows and warblers, as well as marsh birds and waterbirds.

Midmorning, we will transition to Timnath Res for a diversity of waterbirds and migrating shorebirds.

We will eat lunch at Lory SP and then go for a moderately difficult walk up Wells Gulch, where we can enjoy birds of the ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests.

The trip will conclude mid-afternoon so Denver birders can be home for supper.

Bring plenty of water, snacks, sunscreen, and lunch. Bring good walking shoes and long pants (we will walk through some tall grass). **Register online or contact leader.**

Prewitt and Jackson Reservoirs

Sunday, August 27

5:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Joey Kellner (Email: vireo1@comcast.net Phone: 303-978-1748)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway to carpool.

Exit I-25 at 58th Ave, go west 2

blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to parking lot on right.

State Parks pass and Jumbo Res/Prewitt Res access permit required--(Habitat Permit or Fishing License).

This is an all-day trip so bring snacks, lunch, plenty of water, sunscreen, and bug spray. Long pants are recommended. **Register online or contact leader.**

Reynolds Park and Pine Valley Ranch (Jefferson County)

Wednesday, August 30

7:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mammershek@msn.com Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From Hwy 73 in Conifer, CO, travel south on US 285 S for 0.3 miles, slightly right onto Kennedy Gulch Rd for 0.1 mi.

Take the first left toward S Foxton Rd. Turn left onto S Foxton Rd (Hwy 97) for 5.6 mi to Reynolds Park at 14070 S Foxton Rd, Conifer, CO 80433.

This a WEDNESDAY field trip. The morning will be spent at Reynolds Open Space and then we will drive to Pine Valley Ranch for lunch and more birding in the afternoon.

Certain parts of the trails are narrow and steep and can be difficult walking, especially at Reynolds.

Total walking is about 5 miles for both locations. **Register online or contact leader.**



Mark Amershek tends to bratwurst in a cloud of barbecue smoke. Pat O'Driscoll

PICNIC, continued from page 5

The warm and sunny day was ideal for picnicking, but somebody forgot to tell the birds.

At last count, the tally on the official picnic whiteboard stood at 18 usual-suspect species, including a Yellow Warbler, two kinds of swallows (Barn and Northern Rough-winged), and two hawk species (Cooper's and Swainson's).

"The picnic was a great success," Tom Behnfield said. "It was a good chance for long-time and new DFO members and guests to get together socially in a setting other than a field trip or a monthly meeting program."

Thanks are due to everyone who helped out, especially Tom Behnfield for his organizational leadership, DFO treasurer Sue Summers, who collected everyone's Abraham Lincolns at the "door," and several "unknown soldiers," who led the morning's search for birds.

See you next year . . . I mean, NEXT year!

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [*.jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Upcoming Speakers

Christian Hagenlocher

My Epic Big Year Aug. 28

Gemara Gifford

Birds and Coffee
Sep. 18
(Note new date)

Scott Rashid

Barn Owls Oct. 23

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated
Owl Research Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Another Big Month

When 1 + 1 = 3

Birds 'n' Brats



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/SEPTEMBER 2017/VOL 53 NO 9

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Aurora Reservoir and Prairie Roads (Arapahoe County) Friday, September 1 6:00 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com)
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the northeast corner of Parker Rd and Quincy Ave in Aurora.

This trip will seek migrant shorebirds, terns, other waterbirds, and land birds. Plan for a few miles of mostly level walking. Bring a scope if you have one.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Saturday, September 2 6:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Rebecca Laroche (Email: RebeccaLaroche@gmail.com)
Phone: 626-318-4435)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

We hope to see late shorebird migrants, many waterfowl, and raptors, as well as migrant songbirds. Be prepared to carpool from the Visitors Center. Participants

Continued on page 2

Epic Big Year with Christian Hagenlocher

“Why do you bird?” is the question that Christian Hagenlocher asked birders he encountered across the country as he pursued a Big Year in 2016.

Hagenlocher will share what he learned at the monthly DFO meeting on August 28, 2017 in the Ricketson Auditorium of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS). His presentation is entitled, *My Epic Big Year*.

The meeting begins at 7:30 pm and is free and open to the public. Park on the north side of the Museum and enter the security/employee entrance. Tell them you are there for the DFO meeting and they will direct you to the Auditorium.

Hagenlocher became the youngest birder to break 700 doing an American Birding Association Big Year in 2016. His adventure took him to 49 states, 48 of which he drove to in his Subaru Outback. His approach to a Big Year focused on more than seeing a high number of birds and resulted in a fascinating snapshot of the birding community across North America.

He is currently writing an autobiographical book about overcoming fear and adversity through developing a love for nature. His passion for birds began at an early age, and has only continued to grow.

As a teacher and licensed falconer, Christian has integrated birds into the curriculum in unique ways, exposing students to the ancient sport of falconry and leading international science-focused trips. He has led students abroad to Belize, Costa Rica, and Israel, and is excited to take students to Peru in 2018.

While birding in Alaska, Christian found a whale washed up on the beach which scientists have recently confirmed to be a new species. Currently, Christian teaches science at The Link School, an alternative high school in Buena Vista, Colorado.

You can find out about Hagenlocher's journey [on his website](#), but you will learn even more at the DFO meeting and can enjoy the company of local birders, as well.



Christian Hagenlocher is the featured speaker monthly DFO meeting on August 28 at DMNS.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

will walk 4-5 miles over level terrain. Scopes will be useful.

Buffalo Peaks Ranch

Sunday, September 3

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Chris Rurik (Email: chrisrurik@gmail.com Phone: 253-225-7104)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 18

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at the intersection of Highway 285 and C-470 at 4277 South Eldridge St. We will carpool to the ranch, a drive of 1.5 from there.

Buffalo Peaks Ranch is set on the upper reaches of the South Platte River and is home of the Rocky Mountain Land Library's residential library. We will bird the ranch, the adjacent Tomahawk SWA. There will be optional birding stops on the way home. Bring lunch.

Denver County Big Day

Monday, September 4

6:30 AM - 7:30 PM

Chris Rurik (Email: chrisrurik@gmail.com Phone: 253-225-7104)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Bluff Lake Nature Center, 3400 Havana Way, Denver, CO.

All kinds of resident and migrant species can be expected in a variety of habitats. Goal is to find more than 80 species. Exact route to be determined.

The group will be moving fairly quickly. If you want to join for just part of the day, please email leader.

Southwestern Metro Area

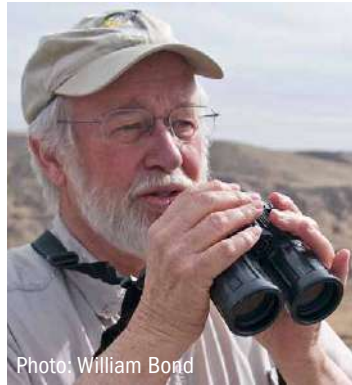
Tuesday, September 5 6:00

AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Continued on next page

Evolving DFO



From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

*"Time keeps on slippin', slippin', slippin'
Into the future..."*

- from *"Fly Like an Eagle"*
by Steve Miller

*"The future is socially and culturally constructed,
but nonetheless real."*

- from *Homo Prospectus*,
Martin E. P. Seligman, et al.

Two days ago, on a Sunday afternoon, I sat with three other members of the newly formed DFO Communication and Outreach (C&O) Committee.

Topics we discussed ranged widely from *The Lark Bunting* to social media and from the website to external media like newspapers, TV, and bulletin boards.

Two days previously, four other DFO members met in the first get together of the also new DFO Finance Committee. That committee is the next step in our commitment to assure the financial stability of DFO.

These efforts along with the work of DFO's other committees and volunteers are part of that strangely human endeavor of attempting to shape the future. In this case, it's the future of birding in the Denver metropolitan area. This skirts dangerously close to becoming a lofty idea. Then again, it may simply be a real reflection of the important role our bird club plays in the human social ecology of the Front Range.

You can't be a birder for long without discovering how important birds are in the human psyche. As soon as a friend discovers you're a birder, the questions come.

"What are those big white birds I saw? They look like pelicans, but this is Colorado."

"Are those birds on the lake seagulls? Why are they so far from the ocean?"

"What are those beautiful bright yellow birds?"

Birds are an ever present and compelling part of the human environment. When you and I became birders, we became the specialized cells in the human superorganism dedicated to thinking about birds.

For more than seven decades, DFO has done an outstanding job of helping members think about and enjoy that amazing creature with feathers we call a "bird".

The C&O Committee is planning ways to improve our communication with members about our birding activities. The committee is also exploring how to let more people outside of DFO know that this is the place to come to learn about birds and birding.

Equally important for DFO's future is our financial stability. The Finance Committee is maturing the processes that will ensure we continue to have sound management of DFO funds.

Fall Bird Count 2017

Birders in metro Denver have participated in Fall Bird Counts for many years and they are a lot of fun. They are now sponsored by Denver Audubon.

There is no fee to participate, but some sites require a State Parks pass or preregistration. Bring binoculars, scopes for the reservoir counts, field guide, lunch, and water. Participation is encouraged. Everyone is welcome to help—the more eyes we have to see birds, the better.

Visit the [Denver Audubon Field Trips](#) page for details. The dates are September 8–11, 2017.



Osprey at Shadow Mountain reservoir. Alistair Montgomery

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at West Deer Creek Canyon Road near Wadsworth.

Specific birding spots in the southwest corner of the Metro Area will be selected the day of the trip to highlight migrants. May include Chatfield SP, which requires a State Parks pass of day pass. Plan for 3-4 miles of walking.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Wednesday, September 6 6:00 AM - 11:00 AM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch. Plan for up to 3-5 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single-track trails. Wear light hiking shoes.

Ouzel Falls, Rocky Mt. Natl. Park Thursday, September 7 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Bill Wuerthele (Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com Phone: 303-333-2519)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the Wild Basin Trailhead in the Park. Take Colorado #7 north from Allenspark to the Wild Basin turnoff and the Park entrance station. Follow the access road, beyond the entrance, to its end at the Wild Basin Trailhead.

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

We will follow the Wild Basin Trail to Ouzel Falls and back, a round trip hike of about 5.5 miles with an elevation gain of approximately 900 feet.

Participants should bring appropriate clothing for the season, including rain gear, and wear shoes appropriate for hiking a rocky trail. Bring lunch.

Carpooling to the Park is recommended. An annual or day Park Pass is required.

Joder Ranch

Saturday, September 9

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From U.S. 36 on the north side of Boulder, take Lee Hill Drive west. After the road turns north, stay right onto Old Stage Road. At the stop sign at Lefthand Canyon Drive, go straight and immediately turn into Buckingham Park Parking lot.

This is a moderate to difficult half-day hike of 4 miles. Expect a variety of foothills birds.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, September 10

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza & Bill Wuerthele (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half-day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over about 3 miles. Trails

Continued on next page

Egrets, we've had a few . . .

An update on the DFO Colonial Waterbirds Nestwatch Project

by Patrick O'Driscoll, Coordinator, DFO Colonial Waterbirds Nestwatch Project

Early August marks six months since we inaugurated the Denver Field Ornithologists' first citizen science project — monitoring nesting colonies of large wading and waterbird species in several prominent Metro Denver parks.

The first eBird list on behalf of the project was filed on February 5, the day a single Double-crested Cormorant circled over the Duck Lake nesting site in Denver City Park. The big black diver landed nearby in Ferril Lake, where it cruised the surface and displayed its signature feathered crests, the seasonal sign of a breeding adult.

Since that day, 10 individual DFO members have shared a combined total of 100 eBird lists with the project, recording their observations of cormorant, Snowy Egret, and Black-crowned Night-Heron nesting behavior and numbers at five locations.

Four are in local parks popular with both birds and humans: Grasmere Lake in Washington Park, Denver; Kountze Lake in Belmar Park, Lakewood; Tabor Lake in Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Wheat Ridge; and Duck and Ferril Lakes in City Park, Denver. A fifth location, the Parker Water Department ponds, is a restricted site where two DFO volunteers have been granted access to monitor.

Later this year, we will use the power of eBird's database to sort, process, and analyze the 2017 numbers, creating a baseline against which future years can be compared. Building on this foundation, DFO hopes to create a profile of our local colonial waterbird populations — a picture that should grow more robust and detailed with each passing year.

We intend to mark key colony intervals — arrivals and departures of significant numbers of migrating birds, as well as notable shifts in numbers and other dynamics. We also hope to approximate numbers of breeding adults, occupied nests and fledged young, as well as collect and compare observations of courtship, breeding, nesting, bird mortality and other colony behaviors.

Already, our careful observations have tallied populations larger than most previous counts and triggered eBird requests for evidence to support what we saw.

At its peak, the boisterous spring-summer colony of Double-crested Cormorants in City Park's Duck Lake numbered more than 750 adults, juveniles, and chicks. We also noted nest mortality in locations slammed by the violent hailstorms of spring and early summer.

Our aim is to turn this simple and easy exercise in individual citizen observation by birders into a tool to help track change in these and other nesting sites. These locations are as important to the thousands who enjoy the birds' presence in our parklands each season as they are to the species that breed, raise, and fledge their young in them.

But so far, just 10 of DFO members have joined in by birding these parks, observing the waterbird colonies, and contributing their observations to the cause. Imagine if we had the power of five or 10 times that many pairs of

Continued on page 5



Great Blue Heron pair with surviving young at Belmar Park on May 9, one day after big hail storm took its toll on nesting herons and cormorants. *Rob Raker*

EGRETS, continued from page 4

binoculars, scopes, and camera lenses trained on these natural laboratories of avian life in our midst.

And the 2017 nesting year is not yet over, so it's not too late to take part. Although not breeding year-round, cormorants have been seen in these places every month but January and will linger in large numbers well into autumn. Birders have recorded Great Blue Herons in these locations in every month but December. And colonies of Snowy Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons will tarry into September and beyond before migration beckons.

Visit one of these sites soon and try your hand. No special skills are needed, only the alert eyes and ears and natural curiosity that already make you a birder.

For an easy how-to and some seasonal background on the sites, visit the [Colonial Waterbirds](#) page of the DFO website. If you have more questions, contact me by email at patodrisk@gmail.com or phone at 303-837-0864.

Come next spring, also expect DFO to offer field trips with a focus on nesting colonies at these sites. By early February, the Double-crested Cormorants will be showing up, with Black-crowned Night-Herons and Snowy Egrets to follow in late March and early April.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

Southwestern Metro Area Tuesday, September 12 6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at West Deer Creek Canyon Road near Wadsworth. From C-470 go south on Wadsworth, turn right on Deer Creek Canyon Road and park on the north side of Deer Creek Canyon Road.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip to highlight migrants and possible rarities. May include Chatfield SP, which requires a State Parks pass or day pass. Plan for 3-4 miles of walking.

Barr Lake State Park Wednesday, September 13 7:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Ira Sanders (Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Barr Lake SP Visitor Center. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Migrant warblers and other migrants are expected, along with some waterfowl and/or waterbirds. Easy walking on flat path. Trip may be 3/4 day depending on birds and weather. Beginners are welcome.

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Eastern Boulder County Friday, September 15 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Christie Owens (Email:
christieowens2@icloud.com
Phone: 303-772-6048)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Cottonwood Marsh parking lot. From northbound U.S. 36 take Foothill Parkway exit. Go north 2 miles to Arapahoe Ave., then east to 75th Street.

Go north on 75th Street past Valmont Road and the railroad tracks. Turn left at Wildlife Habitat sign.

This is a 3/4-day trip to explore the many ponds and lakes in eastern Boulder County during DFO's Big Month. Bring a scope, if you have one.

Chatfield State Park Saturday, September 16 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email:
mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at swim beach by entering west entrance of park off S Wadsworth, 1.5 miles south of C-470. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Explore the park for early migrants, waterfowl, resident birds, and raptors. Bring lunch and a scope, if you have one.

Belmar Historic Park Saturday, September 16 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Belmar Historic Park is at 800 S Wadsworth

Continued on next page

National Parks Senior Pass price to rise

by Patrick O'Driscoll

If you're 62 or older and you like to bird in the national parks, no doubt by now you've heard the hubbub: *There's LESS THAN A MONTH LEFT to get your lifetime Senior Pass for only TEN BUCKS before the price goes THROUGH THE ROOF! Hurry, hurry! DON'T WAIT!!*

The reality is this: whether you get your senior pass before or after the price changes on Monday, Aug. 28, it will remain the best "senior discount" on the planet. Here are the critical details.

If you don't already have the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Recreational Lands Senior Pass (for ages 62 and up), you can still get one in person for \$10 through Sunday, Aug. 27.

It is available at five places in the Denver-Boulder-Fort Collins area and eight of the state's 12 units of the National Park Service. Visit the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), for a state-by-state list, with phone numbers and websites.

Note: Two or three of the Colorado sites on the list do NOT offer the Senior Pass, so read carefully. The Park Service's Intermountain Region headquarters office in Lakewood no longer offers the pass, although it is still on the list. It is wise to phone ahead first.

A few sites where birders may find it convenient to purchase a pass are Rocky Mountain National Park, Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, the Bureau of Land Management's Colorado state office, and the U.S. Forest Service's Map Store in Lakewood. You can also buy your pass [online or by mail](#). However, all locations, online or in person, are doing heavy business now because of the price increase. If you send or postmark your order before the Aug. 27 deadline, you're in – but it might take longer to fill. One more note: There's a \$10 processing fee for mail or online orders, so the total cost is \$20.

On Aug 28, the \$10 lifetime pass will rise to \$80. A law that Congress passed in December 2016 requires that the cost of lifetime Senior Passes match that of the annual, non-senior parks and recreation lands pass. That one costs \$80 for folks under age 62.

But there's a nifty new twist to the Senior Pass program. You can, in effect, pay for your \$80 lifetime pass in four annual \$20 installments. They call it the "annual" Senior Pass, and it costs \$20 starting Aug. 28. But if you come back and buy one again next year, and for two more years after that, you get to trade them all in for a free lifetime pass. Same pass, good for you and up to 3 other adults to get into any national park or other federal lands recreation site that charges an entry fee.

Ready, Set, eBird!

More and more birders are finding that eBird offers an easy way to document bird sightings either in the field with a smart phone or afterward from a home computer. Even better, eBird lists can be shared with others and are very important for citizen science projects like the DFO Colonial Waterbird Nesting Project. To get started, visit the [eBird website](#) and create an account. Look for tips on how to use eBird in future issues of *The Lark Bunting*. Have a great tip you would like to share with the DFO community? Send to Sharon Tinianow, editor of *The Lark Bunting*, at sharontinianow@gmail.com.

DFO funds NEW! Sylvia Brockner book: *Mountain Birds of Colorado*

by Kathanne Lynch, Editor, *Mountain Birds of Colorado*

At age 97, Sylvia Brockner of Evergreen has published a 104-page book called *Mountain Birds of Colorado: A Layman's Guide to Birdwatching in Colorado's Mountain Areas*.

Sylvia and I started this book seven years ago with the support of a grant from the Denver Field Ornithologists and enthusiasm from Evergreen Audubon.

The book contains an article for each of 50 bird species likely to be seen in the foothills of Colorado's Rocky Mountains. It is organized by season. Sylvia begins each article with her own black-and-white sketch to illustrate key bird field identification marks. A description that is both poetic and factual follows for each bird.

The layperson will be comfortable reading her relaxed newspaper style prose. The seasoned birder will learn more about the bird and its habitat.

Sylvia and her late husband, Bill Brockner, were members of DFO since they moved to Evergreen in 1965. She wrote over 2200 nature articles for the Evergreen weekly newspaper from 1972-2017.

To purchase a copy of *Mountain Birds of Colorado*, contact Sylvia at sylviabrocker@gmail.com. The cost is \$18 which includes shipping.



Long-billed Curlew at Blue Lake in Bent County in June 2017. *Ira Sanders*

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Blvd in Lakewood. Meet in the parking lot near the lake.

This is an easy walk around the ponds. A good trip for beginners and accessible for persons with a disability.

Pinecliffe/Rollinsville/Moffat Tunnel East Portal Sunday, September 17 7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at CO-72 (Coal Creek Canyon Road) and Plainview Road. We will carpool from this parking lot.

We will bird the river at the carpool area and then go to Wondervu, Pinecliffe, Rollinsville and the East Portal of Moffat Tunnel. At the tunnel, we will hike the S Boulder Creek trail for a mile or two. Bring lunch and dress for mountain weather. We finish by mid-afternoon.

Southwestern Metro Area Tuesday, September 19 6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at West Deer Creek Canyon Road near Wadsworth. From C-470 go south on Wadsworth, turn right on Deer Creek Canyon Road and park on the north side of Deer Creek Canyon Road.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip to highlight migrants and possible rarities. May include Chatfield SP, which requires a State Parks pass or day pass. Plan for 3-4 miles of walking.

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Field Trips

Continued from page 7

First Creek at Denver Open Space

Saturday, September 23
6:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Meet at the First Creek parking lot. From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

We'll walk 3.5 miles of paved path along the creek and the Buckley Road pedestrian-bicycle path. Dress for the season. Closest public restroom facilities are at the King Soopers off Tower Road.

Pawnee National Grasslands (Weld County)

Sunday, September 24
6:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Karen Drozda & Chris Goulart (Email: drozforte@AOL.com Phone: 303-388-0891)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 Broadway to carpool. Exit I-25 at 58th Ave, go west 2 blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to parking lot on right.

We will meet promptly at 6 AM, assemble carpools, and leave at 6:10 AM. We will visit several productive sites, looking for migrating sparrows, longspurs, passerines and raptors.

This is an all-day trip. Be

prepared with plenty of food and water. Bring gear for changing weather, a hat, and your scope. Please let the trip leaders know if you have 2 way radios that we could use.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR **Sunday, September 24** **8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

We'll look for migrants, waterfowl, raptors, and bison. We'll carpool from the Visitor's Center. Short walks on level trails. Good for beginning birders. Visitor's Center restroom opens at 9 AM.

Eastern Arapahoe and Adams Counties

Tuesday, September 26
6:00 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Sooper's parking lot. Take I-70 east from Denver to the First Street exit and go north. Turn left on West Market Place Drive, then go right into the King Sooper's lot.

We will travel the back roads in search of prairie breeders, shorebirds, and possible rare migrants. Some easy walking. We will carpool from the meet-

ing place. Restrooms may be limited at times. Bring lunch,

Ken Caryl Valley Area **Wednesday, September 27** **6:30 AM - 11:00 AM**

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch. Plan for up to 3-5 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill, possible rocky trails and single track. Wear light hiking shoes.

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Saturday, September 30
7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferrill Lake.

We'll check on the cormorant and egret colonies but focus on early autumn migrants. We'll walk 2-3 miles, from Ferrill Lake to the "pinetum" below the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and back west to Duck Lake and productive old groves on the park's west side. Dress for the weather.

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Leslie Clemensen

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [*.jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome New Members: James Cherney and Linda Cherney, Wheat Ridge; Leslie Clemensen, Parker; Vanessa Coats, Denver; Andrew Fontenot, Denver; Linda Halvorson, Centennial; Cynthia Kristensen, Castle Rock; Mary Metcalf, Aurora; Chris Prah, Golden

Upcoming Speakers

Christian Hagenlocher

My Epic Big Year Aug. 28

Gemara Gifford

Birds and Coffee
Sep. 18
(Note new date)

Scott Rashid

Barn Owls Oct. 23

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated
Owl Research Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Evolving DFO

Nestwatch

August Program



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/OCTOBER 2017/VOL 53 NO 10

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. **Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.**

First Creek at RM Arsenal Sunday, October 1 7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email:
jbreitsch@hotmail.com
Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north). From I-70 go to Pena Blvd.

Drive north to 56th Ave Exit. Turn left at the light, go under the highway, turn right almost immediately, into the First Creek parking lot.

We will walk up Buckley Road, then we turn west at the creek instead of east. The trail should be finished all the way out to the concrete bunker that can be used as a viewing blind.

We'll hope to see some late migrants and a few resident species. There currently are no restroom facilities.

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A look into the home life of Barn Owls

Please note that this meeting is on the 3rd Monday instead of the 4th Monday of the month



Scott Rashid is the featured speaker at the September program.

Scott Rashid, Founder and Director of the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI) in Estes Park, will be the featured speaker at the next DFO meeting on **Monday, September 18** at 7:30 p.m. in the Ricketson Auditorium of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Park on the north side of the Museum and enter the north side security/employee entrance. Tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Rashid began building and placing nest boxes for Barn Owls in Boulder and Larimer counties in 2014 when he noticed that Barn Owl numbers were declining across the northern Front Range. With the assistance of several volunteers, he built 10 nest boxes and placed them in what he thought would be suitable habitat. One nest box in Lafayette had cameras mounted both inside and outside of the nest box.

The cameras allowed Rashid to monitor almost every aspect of the owls' lives, from the evening the first owl arrived at the box, through courtship, egg laying, incubation, feeding the young, growth of young, fledging, and post fledging activities. The cameras also showed Rashid that his nest boxes were too small. Even though his boxes were large by some people's standards, they were too small for the owls, resulting in the death of some young birds. He has since revised his nest box building plans.

Rashid, with the help volunteers, also banded all of the birds in the nest boxes. Through banding of the owls, he learned that Barn Owls almost never return to the nest in which they were born, or the one in which they previously nested. Come listen to Rashid's presentation about the fascinating lives of Barn Owls in Northern Colorado and learn about their remarkable abilities to hunt, raise young and thrive.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Chico Basin Ranch Saturday, October 7 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the King Soopers parking lot, 5544 Promenade Parkway, Castle Rock, CO 80108.

The driving distance from Castle Rock will be approximately 100 miles and take a little over two hours.

Chico Basin Ranch is a working cattle ranch and there is an entry fee. If you have a high clearance vehicle and are willing to drive the ranch roads, let the leader know. We will stop and bird on level open areas such as ponds, wetlands, and grasslands.

Scopes will be handy but not necessary. Two-way radios are helpful. We will bird until 4 p.m. and should be back at Castle Rock around 6 p.m.

Catamount Trail (Green Mountain Trail to Catamount Reservoir)

**Sunday, October 8
6:30 AM - 2:00 PM**

Chris Gilbert (Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com
Phone: 804-214-1508)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

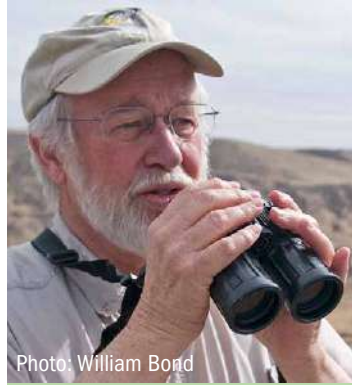
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock, 1360 New Beale St, Castle Rock, CO 80108 Take I-25 south, exit at Founders/Meadows Pkwy (exit 184), turn right (west), then right on Santa Fe Dr., then right on New Beale St.

We will carpool to Green Mountain Falls, about a one hour drive. The hike will be a

Continued on next page

Museums, birders, and bird clubs



From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

Since sometime during the first year I served as DFO president, my mind has occasionally wandered to the topic of the relationship between natural history museums and bird clubs. Recently, emails from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS) have reignited those musings.

The emails announced new terms for DFO's Associate Membership in the museum. That membership provides our meeting space at DMNS and the new agreement makes major changes in our meeting terms. It would change our meeting time from 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Monday of the

month to 5:30 p.m. the second Monday.

The change is to reduce conflicts between our meetings and the needs of the museum's catering department. There are other changes as well. The DFO board is concerned that a 5:30 p.m. meeting time would significantly reduce our attendance, which in recent years has averaged 102 people at each meeting.

My mental musings about bird clubs and museums almost always lead to the life path of Ted Parker. If you've read Kenn Kaufman's *Kingbird Highway* or Don Stap's *A Parrot Without a Name*, you've met Ted Parker.

Parker first became known to the birding world when, as a teenager, he broke the 600 Big Year barrier. And he did it in style, ticking 627 species. Parker went on to become the preeminent Neotropical ornithologist of the late 20th century until his untimely death in a plane accident while surveying the Ecuadorian cloud forest.

In the mid-1960s, I birded with the Lancaster County Bird Club which met at the North Museum of Natural History. At the time, several members of the club were taking a young local birder under wing and cultivating his passion for birds.

One of them, Dick Ludwig, became the volunteer Curator of Ornithology at the North Museum where he recruited that young birder as his assistant. The young birder was Ted Parker and the Lancaster County Bird Club and North Museum were formative influences in his development as an ornithologist.

Halfway across the continent from Lancaster County and some 30 years earlier in Denver, Colorado, students of Robert Niedrach organized the Colorado Bird Club, which became the DFO. Niedrach was Curator of Ornithology at the Colorado Museum of Natural History which became DMNS. Through those many name changes for both the club and the museum, DMNS has remained home to DFO.

DFO is currently one of four Associate Members of the museum. The others are the Colorado Archaeological Society, the Western Interior Paleontological Society, and the Egyptian Study Society. The DMNS affiliation with these clubs is a clear reflection of the museum's mission to "Be a catalyst! Ignite our community's passion for nature and science."

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Last Month's Program: *EPIC Big Year*

Tim Johnson

About 80 birders suffering from list envy gathered in Ricketson Auditorium at DMNS on August 28 to hear Christian Hagenlocher describe his recent life and times in a presentation entitled *My EPIC Big Year*.

Hagenlocher, a graduate of Principia College in Illinois and currently a science teacher at the Link School in Buena Vista, decided to do a Big Year after his job as photographer with a video production company collapsed in early 2016.

Since at that point he had already documented over 300 species, friends helped convince him to go for the gold, which he set at 700 species. By the end of July, he reached the 700 mark and decided to go for 750. He got to 752 and, probably, there were a few more, but he wanted his records to be squeaky-clean.

In a twist on the normal Big Year itinerary, in which one bags as many species as credit card limits allow, Christian decided to crisscross the USA in a less focused fashion.

For example, he stopped to replenish funds with a part-time job as resort dishwasher on Georgia's Little St. Simon's Island; paused for a few days to assist at Maine's Hog Island Audubon Camp; worked with high school students in Moab, Utah; and spent almost a month in Gambell, Alaska on St. Lawrence Island where he worked in the local school.

His funding was derived from diverse sources, such as selling deer antlers on Craigslist, conducting a crowdfunding campaign, and, in general, living as cheaply as possible in order to afford the flights to Alaska. Altogether, he logged fewer miles in the air than he did in his Subaru, which also served as lodging about a quarter of the year. He drove to 48 states in the process.

His philosophy is summarized in the Birding Project's EPIC acronym- **E**ngage others to promote learning; **P**reserve bird habitat in urban and rural areas; **I**nspire people to explore outside; **C**onnect people with nature using technology.

His blog (<http://www.thebirdingproject.com>) contains numerous short interviews with birders he met along the way. He likes to photograph people's hands holding binoculars, which he feels is an indicator of birder character.

Continued on page 5

PRESIDENT, *continued from page 2*

Through our programs and field trips, DFO lights the passion for birds in our members and the community. The other affiliate groups fill a similar mission in their respective fields of natural and scientific interest.

The recent meeting changes that DMNS has presented our club will make it difficult to maintain our meetings at the museum. Given the close alignment between DFO and the mission, vision and core values of DMNS, I am hopeful we can maintain our historic relationship and together we will fledge the next Ted Parker. We'll let you know how things progress.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

6-mile round trip with some elevation gain at the start. We will see waterfalls and scenery. We should see many of the typical mountain birds like Steller's Jays and Evening Grosbeaks.

We will eat lunch up at the reservoir. Scopes are welcomed but not necessary (you'll have to carry it 6 miles if you bring it).

Chatfield State Park, The Big Sit Sunday, October 8

6:45 AM - 6:45 PM

Joey Kellner (Email: vireo1@comcast.net Phone: 303-978-1748)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From the Wadsworth Blvd entrance, go past the pay station to the stop sign, turn right at this 'T' and continue around the reservoir. Cross the S Platte River and continue up the hill. Turn left at the sign for the park headquarters and make a hard left into the large parking lot labeled Heronry Overlook. At the far-right corner, a trail leads down to the Heron Overlook. State Parks pass or day pass required.

The Big Sit is an international birding event. Big Sitters count all the birds they see or hear from within a 17-foot diameter circle. Join Joey Kellner any time from before dawn to after dusk. Drop by whenever you like and stay as long as you like. Bring your own chair and a scope, if you have one.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, October 8

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza & Bill Wuerthele (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

**Ken Caryl Valley Area
Tuesday, October 10
7:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch. Plan for up to 3-5 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single-track trails. Wear light hiking shoes.

**Rueter-Hess Reservoir
(Douglas Co.)
Thursday, October 12
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com
Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO, located on the SW corner of Main St and 20 Mile Rd.

Continued on next page

eBird tip of the month: Get the eBird app

eBird Mobile is an app that passes information directly from iOS and Android devices to your eBird account on the web. Once you have an eBird account set up, you can download the app for your phone or tablet. Then you take your mobile device into field, open the app, and use it record bird observations from any location around the world. Find out about the features of eBird Mobile [here](#).

A new feature of the app allows you to build a trip summary that adds multiple checklists into a summary of all the birds seen in one day. Here is a sample of how that summary looks from a scouting trip that DFO field trip leader Greg Goodrich did in July.

Ggoodrich

eBird Checklist Summary for: Jul 24, 2017, 5:20 AM to Jul 24, 2017, 5:20 PM

Number of Checklists: 7

Number of Taxa: 20

Checklists included in this summary:

- (1): South Platte Park—South Platte Reservoir—Southwest Bay (Jefferson Co); Date: Jul 24, 2017, 2:13 PM
- (2): South Platte Park—C470 area; Date: Jul 24, 2017, 2:20 PM
- (3): Eaglewatch Lake; Date: Jul 24, 2017, 2:47 PM
- (4): Bufflehead Lake; Date: Jul 24, 2017, 2:56 PM
- (5): Redtail Lake; Date: Jul 24, 2017, 3:13 PM
- (6): South Platte Park—Cooley Lake (limited access); Date: Jul 24, 2017, 3:24 PM
- (7): South Platte Park—Carson Nature Center; Date: Jul 24, 2017, 3:40 PM

1 Canada Goose—(2)

1 Wood Duck—(4)

46 Mallard—(1),(2),(4),(5),(7)

12 Double-crested Cormorant—(1),(2)

2 American White Pelican—(6)

1 Great Blue Heron—(1)

2 Osprey—(6)

1 Killdeer—(1)

1 Belted Kingfisher—(2)

2 American Crow—(3)

3 Tree Swallow—(4)

1 Barn Swallow—(3)

2 House Wren—(7)

1 American Robin—(7)

2 Gray Catbird—(4),(7)

1 Yellow Warbler—(4)

1 Red-winged Blackbird—(4)

2 House Finch—(3)

3 American Goldfinch—(3),(4)

7 House Sparrow—(7)



Great Horned Owl at Washington Park in Denver in August 2017. *Sharon Tinianow*

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, continued from page 3

What character traits birders' hands indicate, he left unclear.

Hagenlocher's promised presentation is available on the [DFO website](#). Many of his adventures which were fragmentarily described can be sampled on his blog with accompanying photographs. Thus, I will offer only a few more features of Christian's talk that engaged me:

Hagenlocher waxed ecstatic about opportunities for seeing pelagic birds on certain repositioning cruises. He said one should contact him directly for specifics. A Google search for "birding on repositioning cruises" turns up some interesting prospects.

He mentioned the [Yellow Rails and Rice Festival](#) in Jennings, LA. Here, one can watch Yellow Rails and other birds up close as they are flushed by a combine. The next festival is November 1-5, 2017.

Hagenlocher and some Big Year friends took a side trip in Alaska to see this rare and elusive Gray-headed Chickadee, which lives in scattered patches of habitat throughout the interior.

He emphasized the significance both of birding in places few people go (e.g. the Dry Tortugas and Big Bend National Park) and taking advantage of encounters with people whenever possible.

I found it somehow reassuring that someone like Hagenlocher, who is clearly a dedicated teacher and "people person", can also be a topnotch birder. I hope The Birding Project enjoys continued success.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Tim Ryan of Parker Water Dept. will be our guide. We will first bird Barr CCC Park, which is along Cherry Creek, and then drive to the new reservoir for grassland species and waterfowl on the lake. Bring a scope if you have one.

Chatfield State Park Saturday, October 14 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Edmund J Holub (Email: edmund.holub@gmail.com
Phone: 303-979-2194)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at swim beach by entering west entrance of park off S Wadsworth, 1.5 miles south of C-470. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We should see a good variety of migrating waterfowl on the lake. Be prepared to walk 1 to 1.5 miles.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Sunday, October 15 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Candice Johnson (Email: candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Phone: 303-329-8131)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO. From I-70, take exit 278; turn left onto Quebec St; turn right onto E 60th Ave; turn left onto Trenton St; continue onto Gateway Rd to Visitor Center.

We will drive the new 8-mile wildlife road to look for raptors and prairie species. We hope to see migrating waterfowl. Be prepared to carpool because parking is limited at the lakes. Bison and deer are likely to be seen. We will only walk on level

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5
trails. Plenty of restrooms and pit toilets.

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat/Sawhill (Boulder County)
Saturday, October 21
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From northbound U.S. 36, take Foothills Parkway exit. Go north 2 miles to Arapahoe Ave, then east to 75th St. Go north on 75th St past Valmont Rd and railroad tracks.

Turn left at Wildlife Habitat sign. Follow road west and south to Cottonwood Marsh parking lot.

The trip will involve walking 1-2 miles on level ground. We'll look for late migrants and early winter arrivals. Scopes are useful.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)
Sunday, October 22
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com
Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Enter the east side of Cherry Creek State Park via Lehigh off of Parker Road. Go just past the entrance station and turn left (south) at the first intersection. Park at Pelican Point. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods.

We will carpool from Pelican Point to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Bring a scope if you have one.



White-crowned Sparrow at Grand Lake in July 2017.
Pat O'Driscoll

Littleton Lunch Hour Birding
Friday, October 27
12:15 PM - 1:15 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: The leader will notify participants of the meeting place and birding location the day before the trip.

Join the leader on his lunch hour for a 45-60-minute outing to one seasonally interesting location in Littleton, picking from among local parks, ponds, and reservoirs. Plan for some easy walking. You may eat lunch as we bird, if you like.

Barr Lake State Park
Saturday, October 28
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Paul Slingsby (Email: paslingsby@comcast.net
Phone: 303-422-3728)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From the Bromley Lane exit off I-76, drive east on E 152nd Ave across the railroad tracks and take an immediate

right onto Lark Bunting Lane. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will bird below the dam. Trip may be 3/4 day depending on birds and weather. We will walk about 3 miles, sometimes off trail. We will look for waterfowl, snipes, raptors, and winter sparrows. Beginners are welcome.

Harriman Lake
Sunday, October 29
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Doris Cruze (Email: cruzeduo@aol.com Phone: 303-798-8072)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at Avoca Park & Ride, southwest corner of S. Wadsworth and Highway 285.

We will bird the area just west of the Park & Ride, then drive to Quincy to check areas near the Federal Correctional facility and Harriman Lake.

Expect to see waterfowl and raptors, woodpeckers, and a variety of songbirds. Some walking on level trails; a good trip for beginners.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [*.jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome New Members: Burke Angstman, Lakewood; Laurie Gibb, Denver; Priscilla Jacobs and Mark Jacobs, Greenwood Village; Randi Riggs, Hauula; Brian Sherman and Jennifer Sherman, Denver

Upcoming Speakers

Scott Rashid

Barn Owls

Sep. 18
(Note new date)

Gemara Gifford

Birds and Coffee

Oct. 23

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated

Owl Research

Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 40 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742
Featured This Month
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The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/NOVEMBER 2017/VOL 53 NO 11

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly.

Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Scoter Trip

**Saturday, November 4
5:30 AM - 6:30 PM**

Joey Kellner (Email: vireo1@comcast.net Phone: 303-978-1748)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet on the side of Deer Creek Canyon Rd just west of Wadsworth.

Join in an all-day search for migrant grebes, loons, and scoters. A State Parks pass is required for drivers of carpooling vehicles.

We will carpool in 3 cars and return to meeting location no later than 6:30 PM. **Register online or contact leader.**

Pawnee National Grasslands (Weld County)

**Saturday, November 4
6:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

Amber Carver (Email: caramb22@gmail.com Phone: 310-483-5721)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Colo-

Continued on page 2

Coffee, communities and conservation



Gemara Gifford is the speaker at the October program

Gemara Gifford, Director of Development and Biodiversity for Trees, Water & People, will be the featured speaker at the next DFO meeting on **Monday, October 23** at 7:30 p.m. in the Ricketson Auditorium of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Park on the north side of the Museum and enter the north side security/employee entrance. Tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Shade coffee growers in Central America may hold the secret to conserving migratory birds and alleviating poverty at the same time. The benefits of shade coffee farms to birds (and likewise, the benefits of birds to coffee farms) has been well documented.

Shade coffee provides high-quality habitat for birds, especially in fragmented areas with little forest, and may even serve as matrix habitat for forest-dwelling species. Migratory birds reduce pest damage to coffee crops during an important time of their growth cycle.

Diverse coffee agroecosystems also improve farmer livelihoods and food security, because they are grown with a diversity of fruit, nut, and fiber trees, and are sometimes combined with local crops such as maize, beans, and squash.

Unfortunately, our days of drinking bird-friendly (and people-friendly!) coffee could be limited. A recent coffee rust has reduced coffee production by up to 60% in some areas of Central America, while farmers in other parts of the world are being incentivized to cut shade trees, and grow coffee as a treeless monoculture with high agrochemical use.

If farmers in Central America cannot recover from this plague, they too may opt to cut their shade trees or be pulled into intensive export markets such as broccoli or palm oil.

Trees, Water & People (TWP) is a Colorado nonprofit, working to make sure that coffee farmers thrive in Central America. Since 2015, TWP has worked with Centro de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de Agricultura Sostenible (CEASO), a Honduran NGO, to develop community-operated tree nurser-

Continued on page 3

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

rado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 Broadway to carpool. Exit I-25 at 58th Ave, go west 2 blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to parking lot on right.

This all-day field trip will explore the Pawnee National Grassland during the “off season.”

We will look for Lapland Longspurs and other species that overwinter on the Pawnee. Plan on a combination of car birding and easy walking.

Meet at the CPW at 6 AM and leave by 6:10. Bring a scope if you have one. If you have two-way radios you’re willing to lend for the day, let me know. **Register on line or contact leader.**

First Creek at Denver Open Space

**Sunday, November 5
6:45 AM - 11:00 AM**

Patrick O’Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955 (cell))

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

Or, take I-70 east to Pena Blvd. Drive north to 56th Ave Exit. Turn left at the light and at the bottom of the off ramp, pass under the highway and turn right, almost immediately, into the First Creek parking lot.

Raptors may include Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks and Bald eagles, along with Red-tailed hawks. Six or more kinds of sparrows are possible.

We’ll walk 1.5 miles of paved path to Tower Road and back. At present, there are no restrooms at this location. Public facilities

Continued on next page

Democracy, trust, and bird clubs

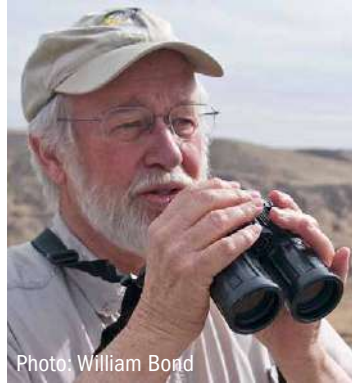


Photo: William Bord

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

twentieth century, he uncloaks the tools used by tyrants to exercise control and break down trust.

Snyder also offers antidotes, including this: “Be active in organizations, political or not, that express your own view of life.” Birding with 2, 3, or 12 friends or acquaintances is a blatant exercise of the right of free association. And, so is attending a program on birds with 100 or so other folks whose view of life includes appreciation of the feathered dinosaurs we call birds.

Free association is anathema to tyrants. It is enshrined in that great work of democracy The Bill of Rights. Surveys of DFO members and conversations with many of you confirm that you value the social aspect of birding and bird programs as much as other aspects of our pastime.

Those social engagements help us maintain our trust in other people. They are an antidote to the polarization that can be associated with too much focus on small screens and too little conversation.

I’m not advocating for either or any of our political parties. I am advocating that we keep birding together, keep talking, and keep thinking together – about birds and other important parts of our world.



Cinnamon Teal pair. Jim Esten

Research, Education, and Conservation Grants Fund donations are tax-deductible

by Candice Johnson

The time to renew your membership is coming soon and the DFO Committee on Research, Education, and Conservation wants to remind you how easy it is to make a tax-deductible donation to support projects that protect birds and their habitats.

Last year, our members set a new record for donations and we funded over \$6000 in new grants. Here are the projects we funded:

- Study of bird diversity at Chatfield State Park to improve remediation efforts if the water level rises by Erin Bissell, Metropolitan State University
- Study of breeding schedules and habitat of Mountain Plovers by T. Michels and A. Pierce, University of Colorado Denver
- Study of habitat selection of Flammulated Owls before and after a burn event by Scott Yanco, University of Colorado Denver
- Study of how Flammulated Owl males maximize territories for breeding by Katherine McGuinn, Colorado College
- Study of Cinnamon Teal nesting success at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge by Casey Setash, Colorado State University

In past years, we have also funded scholarships for high school students to attend local birding camps, such as those run by the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. You can find out more about past projects and how to donate on the [DFO website](#). Please remember us again this year, and thanks in advance for your consideration.

COFFEE, *continued from page 1*

ies in twelve high elevation villages bordering the Montecillos Cloud Forest Reserve. Almost 100,000 trees have been planted across the region so far to diversify existing shade coffee farms, or as “fiber” trees used for fuelwood.

In addition, 220 coffee-growing families in the region have received fuel-efficient cook stoves, which improve household air quality and use 50% less forest fuelwood, taking pressure off already fragmented forests.

Lastly, CEASO has been leading sustainable agriculture workshops in these communities, helping farmers to recover from the recent coffee plague and pine-beetle epidemic.

Bird conservation in Central America must include human livelihoods at the core. Indeed, it is smallhold farmers who live closest to the land and remaining forests and have a canvas of opportunity, by way of coffee, to improve the lives of birds and people alike.

That’s why TWP and CEASO are working together to make sure coffee farmers can continue their way of life, while helping the planet at the same time. Come and find out why “farmer-friendly coffee” is what bird-lovers should be drinking.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

ties are at the King Soopers on Tower Road and area service stations. **Register online or contact leader.**

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

**Thursday, November 9
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO, located on the SW corner of Main St and 20 Mile Rd for birding there and later at the Rueter-Hess Reservoir, which is open to the public only with entry permission.

Tim Ryan of Parker Water Dept. will be our guide. We will first bird Barr CCC Park, then drive to the new reservoir for grassland species and waterfowl on the lake.

Bring a scope if you have one.

Register online or contact leader.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

**Sunday, November 12
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Ken Caryl Valley Area Tuesday, November 14 7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park on South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

We will visit private Ken Caryl Ranch, nearby South Valley Park, and Deer Creek Canyon. Plan for up to 3-5 miles of walking on mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single-track trails. **Register online or contact leader.**

Littleton Lunch Hour Birding Friday, November 17 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: The leader will notify participants of the meeting place and birding location the day before the trip.

Join the leader on his lunch hour for a 45-60-minute outing to one seasonally interesting location in Littleton, picking from among local parks, ponds, and reservoirs.

Plan for some easy walking. You may eat lunch as we bird, if you like. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on next page

Big Year 2018—In the Nest

by David Suddjian

If we are going to go big, we may as well go really big! We have tested our wings with “Big Months” in May and September, counting species seen on DFO field trips in the nine counties of the greater Denver metro area.

But it has been decided: Big Year 2018 will expand to include all of Colorado! This considerably widens the pool of species we can plan to encounter and gives us the opportunity to visit many new places to search them out.

The game: how many species can we identify on DFO field trips in Colorado in 2018?

In planning a Big Year, it is important to identify target species that require visits to specific locations at favorable dates and to identify key locations that will offer the best chances for rare birds that cannot be exactly planned for.

Working from the Colorado state bird list species, we can ascribe a code to each species, ranging from species that are:

- Code 1 - Widespread and/or easy to find during the year without any special effort (approx. 200 species),
- Code 2 - Less widespread but still fairly easy to find if we visit the proper region of the state at the proper season (80 species)
- Code 3 - Regional specialties that require visits to key sites at the proper season (57 species)
- Code 4 - Rarities ranging from those with established patterns to those found only one or a few times in the state (165 species)

Some of the most fun will be special trips targeting Code 3 species. Some will take us farther afield, meeting DFO’s goal of providing more trips away from the Denver region and more overnight trips.

These will be trips that take us to the far flung southeast, northeast, west slope, and mountain areas. We will visit some of Colorado’s best birding areas at some very exciting seasons as we seek the specialties.

DFO’s Field Trip Committee and field trip leaders will be developing a detailed plan of coverage so that we can make sure we clean up the essential Code 2’s and target outings for as many Code 3’s as feasible. The Code 4’s will be gravy!

How many species can we find on DFO field trips in CO in 2018? It turns out that 2017 has taken the lead with the most species ever found in one year on DFO trips - 272 and counting as of September. But Big Year 2018 should be able to smash 2017’s record.

If we find 100% of Code 1 birds (do-able), 100% of Code 2 birds (a challenge), just 50% of Code 3 birds (lots of careful planning), and only 15% of the Code 4 birds (gravy) we could call 333 species our target for Big Year 2018. This will be about 50 species over DFO’s previous best year!

Enter into the fun challenge of a DFO Big Year. Plan to join trips that will take you to new places and to find new species for your state or life list. Invite friends into the challenge of a club Big Year. One thing is for sure, the more birders out looking, the more we will find!

September Big Month wrapup

by David Suddjian

September proved to be a more challenging month than May for ringing up a high species total for our Big Month. Having hit 193 species this past May, we set an ambitious goal of 200 species for September.

But a hefty 21 field trips in September found just 169 species. Having never done a DFO field trip Big Month in September, it was hard to know what to expect. Our effort was hampered by a slow landbird migration, and limited shorebird habitat.

But there are always good birds! A Painted Bunting was the star for September, as the first sighting on a DFO trip in the past 10 years. Other good finds for September field trips were Cackling Goose, Northern Goshawk, Red Phalarope, Sabine's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black Phoebe, Gray Flycatcher, Eastern Bluebird, and Orchard Oriole.

There were a number of misses. There always are. How did we miss Western Bluebird, all Empids except Gray, and Warbling Vireo? How come we did not find a single vagrant other than Painted Bunting?

But no worries now, as we go forward to DFO's Big Year in 2018. We enjoyed the challenge of a Big Month. All the field trips participants had a good time and built camaraderie within DFO and among local birders. Now we take it to the next level.



Painted Bunting. Chuck Hundertmark

Bird photographs needed

Many of those who bird also enjoy capturing images of them. If you have some great images of birds, please consider sharing those with your fellow birders in *The Lark Bunting*. Images need to be large and very clear.

Contact *Lark Bunting* editor Sharon Tinianow for more information at sharontinianow@gmail.com.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Prospect Park (Wheat Ridge Greenbelt) Saturday, November 18 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue. Go one mile west.

Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south). Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This is a trip with easy walking that is accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Good trip for novice birders and new members. **Register online or contact leader.**

Lakes of Lakewood, Belmar Park

**Sunday, November 19
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

Alison Kondler (Email: BirdingByEar@msn.com Phone: 303-904-9140)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Belmar Historic Park in the parking lot near the lake. Belmar is at 800 South Wadsworth Blvd in Lakewood.

From Alameda and Wadsworth go south on Wadsworth, turn west at the light on West Ohio Avenue. Drive a short 2 blocks to the parking lot behind the buildings.

We will start at Belmar Historic Park, then drive to various ponds, lakes, and reservoirs in Lakewood looking for ducks and other winter birds. Scopes are optional. **Register online or contact leader.**

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Friday, November 24 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Jill Boice (Email:
jill@booksandcats.net
Phone: 303-863-7580)

Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 13

Directions: Meet at the
Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550
Gateway Rd, Commerce City,
CO.

On I-70 east, take exit 278,
turn left onto Quebec St, turn
right onto E 64th Ave, turn left
onto Trenton St, continue onto
Gateway Rd to Visitor Center.

We will visit Lake Ladore and
Lower Derby Lake to check for
waterfowl. Then we will walk
on one of the lesser used, but
mostly easy, trails for 3-4 miles.

Trails are sometimes muddy.
Scopes helpful for lakes but
optional. **Register on line or
contact leader.**

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habi- tat/Sawhill (Boulder County) Saturday, November 25 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Paula Hansley (Email:
plhansley@gmail.com
Phone: 720-890-2628)

Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From northbound
U.S. 36, take Foothill Parkway
exit. Go north 2 miles to Arapa-
hoe Ave, then east to 75th St.

Go north on 75th St past
Valmont Rd and railroad tracks.
Turn left at Wildlife Habitat sign.
Follow road west and south to
Cottonwood Marsh parking lot.

The trip will involve walking
1-2 miles on level ground. We
will look at waterfowl at the
lakes at Walden and Sawhill
Open Space areas, so bring a

Continued on next page

eBird Tip of the Month: *Why use eBird?*

Gregg Goodrich

Here is why:

- 1 eBird is a great personal bird logging system. Keeps count of county, state, country lists and accepts descriptions, photos, and recordings.
- 2 Your use of eBird contributes to science and conservation by providing large amounts of data for researchers to use.
- 3 It makes you a more accurate birder, keeping track of all birds on a trip as well as the number of each species seen.
- 4 It makes you a better birder. Since all rare sightings are reviewed by experts, you are forced to really know your bird ID.
- 5 It makes it easy to share your bird list with others in your trip.
- 6 It has maps and graphs to explore species in more detail.
- 7 You are helping educators, land managers, and ornithologist and conservation biologists, who use it for bird distribution, numbers, and movements of species.
- 8 It documents the presence or absence of species in a given area.

Convinced? Now, consider getting the eBird mobile app. It is easy to use in the field and all submitted lists go directly to your eBird web account. So, no reentry of a trip list once you get home. If you have a smart phone, iPhone or Android, just install the eBird mobile app on your smart phone.

Next month, features of eBird mobile.

**Thank you for your contribution to the Research,
Education and Conservation Grants Fund: Kathy
Bollhoefer, Jim Esten**

Last Month's Program: *Barn Owls*

Tim Johnson

There must be a parliament of owls advising the DFO program committee!

Thanks to a schedule change, about 90 birders got to hear Scott Rashid talk about Barn Owls on September 18, which makes owls the subject of fully half the 2017 DFO meetings so far.

Rashid, whose current position is Director of the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI), has a BA in art from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

He has devoted considerable energy to becoming an accomplished naturalist, as well as artist.

Rashid has authored three books and is primarily responsible for the banding of 12,870 individual birds of 92 species at the YMCA banding station in Estes Park since 1998. This does not include an addi-

tional 5,000 or so Rosy Finches and miscellaneous other birds banded under the auspices of other CARRI projects.

The Barn Owl family contains 17 species, only about 10% of the planet's owl species, and has several unique features. The most notable is the heart-shaped facial disc, which facilitates the bird's supernal hearing ability.

Barn owls also possess retractable flaps over their ears. They have markedly long legs, which help them snatch prey from tall grass and may help the female feed young in cramped nest quarters.

Rashid presented a detailed description of a nesting season for a pair of local Barn Owls, interspersed with additional owl facts and enchanting, must-see videos from cameras placed in several nest boxes.

Continued on page 8

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

scope if you have one. At 75th St and Boulder Creek we should find Dippers and lingering migrants. **Register online or contact leader.**

**Chatfield State Park—
Marina sandpit
Monday, November 26
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From the south entrance of Chatfield meet at the first parking lot which is just south east of the marina.

We will bird several locations in NW Douglas Co. We will use the Sibley app's compare feature to further study the differences between similar species. Fine tune your species ID with this great field guide. **Register online or contact leader.**

Boulder Birders' Weekend

Birds of North America

October 16-November 12, 2017

Dairy Arts Center, Boulder

An award-winning play about a father and daughter who track climate change while watching birds together in their backyard over the course of a decade.

Ticket prices, show information, and a calendar are on the [Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company website](#).

Birders' Weekend

October 27th-29th

Special events around the performances of Birds of North America include speakers and a bird walk planned that weekend. More information can be found [here](#). Use the

discount code FORTHEBIRDS to get \$5 off on tickets for the October

27, 28, or 29 performances of Birds of North America.



Mountain Plover. John Breitsch

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, continued from page 7

CARRI has placed over 20 nest boxes along the Front Range from Boulder to Fort Collins.

A quick overview of Rashid's description: Barn Owls begin to nest in Colorado in March, occasionally in February, and as late as August.

Males arrive at the nest box first and advertise themselves vocally. Females come calling and interact with males for a few days, if interested. Courtship can involve flying together and mutual preening.

If the owls decide to become a pair, an exhausting 10-day period of intense mating follows, succeeded by egg laying at a rate of 1 egg every two or three days. Mating does not stop during this time.

Up to 10 eggs may be laid per clutch, depending on the male owl's hunting prowess and the nest

adequacy. Rashid's research with nest box size indicates that the larger the box, the more eggs are laid, and the less chance that owlets will be trampled by their nestmates.

A brood of owlets can vary considerably in size, since laying an entire clutch of eggs might take close to a month.

Hatching to fledging takes about 60 days, considerably longer than other owls. Preferred nest sites are near tall grass, which is good vole habitat, and near dense tree foliage, allowing males to get a good day's rest away from the brood.

Male owls, while apparently clumsy and ineffective at personally feeding young, are good hunters. In the USA they hunt strictly nocturnally, although in Scotland and a few other places they will hunt by day.

They will bring back about 600 small mammals during a nesting season. Rashid has documented mice, shrews, rabbit, and even birds as prey.

Young owls can ingest entire voles at the age of 2 weeks, which must be a relief for the female owl. Rashid has even observed older owlets feeding younger ones.

Altogether, Rashid's talk was crammed with information. I hope the CARRI project continues and that the cameras will be up and running again next year.

I recommend that readers go to the CARRI web site for further information about Rashid and CARRI. Be sure to watch the video about Rashid. And speaking of videos, the video of his presentation is already on the DFO web site.



City Park DFO field trip the last day of the Big Month. *Mark Amershek*

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [*.jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome new DFO members:

Kathy Bollhoefer, Denver; Bill Schreitz, Centennial

Upcoming Speakers

Gemara Gifford

Birds and Coffee

Oct. 23

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated

Owl Research

Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 40 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Exercise in Democracy

Big Year 2018

Why Use eBird?



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/DECEMBER 2017/VOL 53 NO 12

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://DFOBIRDS.ORG)

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather.

More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

Annual Barrow's Goldeneye Count to Silverthorne Friday, December 1 7:20 AM - 5:30 PM

Paul Slingsby (Email: paslingsby@comcast
Phone: 303-422-3728)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the RTD Park-n-Ride located at Union Blvd and W 2nd Place.

From US 6 go south to the second stoplight. Turn left and proceed toward the end of W 2nd Place. Look for the group at the southeast corner of the Park-n-Ride lot.

We will count Barrow's Goldeneyes and other birds at the Silverthorne water treatment plant, then drive to Hot Sulphur Springs, Lake Granby, Shadow Mountain Lake, and Grand Lake.

Spotting scopes and 2-way radios will be useful. We'll find a warm place to buy lunch. Plan to be back at the meeting place by dark.

Continued on page 2

Nov. program: small owl, big migration



Flammulated Owl

The featured speakers for the November 27 Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO) meeting will be Max Ciaglo and Ross Calhoun, a research duo that have been studying Flammulated Owl ecology since 2013.

A favorite owl of Colorado, the Flammulated Owl is a small and elusive bird.

The same small stature, cryptic nature, and ventriloquist-like vocalizations that make the species a difficult one for birders to spot also make it challenging to study, leading to many historical misconceptions about the species and gaps in current research.

As late as the 1970s, Flammulated Owls (or "Flams" for short) were believed to be non-migratory, spending the winter months in torpor. Popular thinking then shifted to the consideration of Flams as elevational migrants, moving down in elevation during colder months and up in elevation in warmer seasons.

But, vagrant captures and light-level location trackers revealed their true status as long-distance migrants, traveling several thousand miles each year to winter in the sub-tropical climates of Mexico and Central America.

Although our understanding of the migratory habits of Flams has become much more sophisticated in recent years, few studies as yet have focused on the species' behavior and local movements in the time between breeding and fall migration.

For many avian species, this is a vital time to fatten up for migration. Fledglings, in particular, make the most of this period by strengthening their wings and familiarizing themselves with the terrain so that they can find their way back the following spring.

Since 2014 Max Ciaglo and Ross Calhoun have been honored to receive funding from the DFO's Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund to investigate this poorly studied facet of Flammulated Owl ecology.

Working with Colorado College and Dr. Brian Linkhart, Ciaglo and Calhoun conducted research within a well-studied Flam breeding site in central Colorado. Through the course of their study they observed broad movements by fledglings and adult owls, yearly fidelity to pre-migratory sites, and

Continued on page 3

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

South Platte River Trail Saturday, December 2 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email:
jbreitsch@hotmail.com
Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

From I-76 take E 88th Ave exit, go west on 88th for 1.6 miles, then turn south at Colorado Blvd.

Turn left again into the parking lot for the South Platte River Greenway Trailhead.

We will be looking for early winter ducks, raptors, and late fall/winter residents. Hike along paved trail for up to 3 miles.

Denver City Park (Denver County) Sunday, December 3 7:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email:
patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake.

We should see a number of early winter residents, including geese, ducks and a variety of songbirds, corvids and raptors.

Scopes are welcome. Expect to walk up to 3 miles on level surfaces.

Southwestern Metro Area Tuesday, December 5 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email:
dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on next page

2018 DFO meeting schedule changes

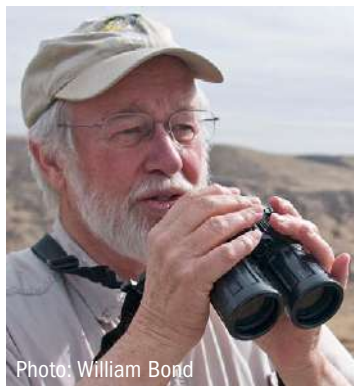


Photo: William Bond

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

Thanks to two months of effort by the Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO) officers and directors, we will continue to meet at Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS) through 2018. However, the dates of our meetings and the location within the museum will change.

For as long as I can remember, DFO has met the fourth Monday of the month. That will change beginning with the January 2018 meeting. We will continue to meet on Mondays, with one exception. However, which Monday of the month will vary.

Our meetings have also been in Ricketson Auditorium, with rare exceptions. Next year, we will alternate between Ricketson and the Planetarium. Here's the 2018 schedule.

Monday, January 29	Ricketson
Monday, February 19	Planetarium
Monday, March 19	Ricketson
Monday, April 16	Planetarium
Monday, August 6	Ricketson
Tuesday, September 4	Planetarium (Because Monday is Labor Day)
Monday, October 1	Ricketson
Monday, November 5	Planetarium

Our start time will also be new next year. In a member survey DFO conducted earlier this year, a plurality of respondents indicated a preference for a start time of 7:00 p.m. DMNS has agreed to the new meeting time, so beginning January 29, 2018, our meetings will start at 7:00 p.m. That should allow us to wrap up by 8:30 or close to it.

These changes came about because there have, from time to time in the past, been conflicts between our meeting schedule and events scheduled by the DMNS catering arm. These conflicts have resulted in changes in the place or date of our meetings. Other associate groups that meet at DMNS have run into similar conflicts.

To reduce the frequency of these changes, DMNS staff initially proposed that four associate groups meet on the same night each month, with two groups meeting at 5:30 p.m. and two at 7:30 p.m. DFO was assigned the 5:30 slot. The DFO member survey mentioned earlier confirmed the Board's suspicion that we would lose attendance with a 5:30 meeting time.

In an emergency meeting on September 16, the DFO Board decided on a two-pronged approach to the challenge. Several Board members agreed to look for alternative meeting locations in case we could not negotiate a better arrangement with the museum. At the same time, the Board authorized me to explore a more workable schedule with the DMNS staff.

Continued on page 3

FLAMMULATED OWL, continued from page 1

recaptures that suggest the owls may be engaging in prospecting behavior to identify potential breeding territories for the following year--a rare discovery in the raptor community!

Ciaglo and Calhoun are now working with the University of Colorado Denver and the Colorado Field Ornithologists to investigate the potential of Stable Isotope Analysis (SIA) to further inform their research.

As new feathers are grown, organic isotopes are incorporated into feather material in a ratio unique to that geographic location. After taking feather samples from a Flam, researchers can use SIA to assess these ratios and make inferences about where that feather was grown, revealing which populations of Flams are migrating through Colorado's front range.

Come to the talk to hear about how these techniques are painting a more cohesive picture of Flammulated Owl ecology and to learn more about this fascinating Colorado bird.

The DFO meeting is at 7:30 p.m. in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

PRESIDENT, continued from page 2

Board members seeking alternative venues discovered the challenges of finding a suitable place for our meetings that have a central location, provide enough seating capacity, have adequate audio-visual support, and that are affordable. Fortunately, at least one suitable location did emerge.

Meanwhile, I met with representatives of the other associate groups and with DFO members who understand processes within the museum. I also talked with our advocates within the museum and through them connected with DMNS staff person, Carla Bradmon. Carla had a key role in trying to find a solution to the problem of associate groups being bumped from their meeting times.

When she became aware of the problems the 5:30 p.m. meeting time would cause for DFO and the Colorado Archaeological Society (CAS), Carla began looking for a solution. She worked behind the scenes for over a week and was able gain agreement within the museum to revise the schedule offered to DFO and CAS.

The current agreement is not ideal, but we now have a year to work on a schedule in 2019 that meets our needs and the needs of DMNS. It also gives us time to reflect on how we might bring value to the museum and communicate that to our museum colleagues.

I appreciate the time and effort of the Board members who worked to find an alternative meeting location. Knowing that side of the challenge was being worked on allowed me to focus on the museum negotiations with confidence.

And without the help and guidance of our advocates within the museum, we might not have avoided a separation. As it stands, we can continue to be aligned with DMNS, an organization whose mission and values are similar to those of DFO.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S Eldridge St, Morrison.

From C-470 take the Quincy exit. Cross over the bridge on W Quincy Ave and park at the far end of the Home Depot parking lot that faces an open field to the south.

We will visit 3-4 specific spots selected the day of the trip based on what is around and weather.

Expect a variety of habitats and walks of up to 1 mile at a time.

First Creek at Rocky Mountain Arsenal Saturday, December 9 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

John Breitsch (Email: jbreitsch@hotmail.com
Phone: 303-588-0552)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

Or take I-70 east to Pena Blvd. Drive north to 56th Ave Exit. Turn left at the light and at the bottom of the off ramp, pass under the highway and turn right, almost immediately, into the First Creek parking lot.

This trip starts at the same parking lot as 1st Creek @ DOS and walks up Buckley Road. But we will turn west at the creek instead of east.

This area is a great place to get a variety of hawks. There currently are no restroom facilities.

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, December 10 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek State Park. From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles.

Trails could be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Monday, December 11 12:00 PM - 4:30 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park on South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

An AFTERNOON trip can be good in December. We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch or nearby South Valley Park and Deer Creek Canyon.

Plan for up to 3-5 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single-track trails.

Weather permitting, the last segment will be a short but strenuous hike to try for pygmy-owl.

eBird Tip of the Month: *Get the mobile app*

Gregg Goodrich

Now that you are using eBird to log your birds, why not download eBird Mobile to your smartphone to log birds in the field? It's free, fast, and easy.

To enter a bird, choose the number of individuals seen and the first few letters of the bird name or banding code. The correct name will appear. To add additional birds of the same species, just touch the number and it will go up in increments of one. To delete a species from a list, just swipe left.

All birds logged will be automatically loaded to your eBird web account. Therefore, you don't have to re-enter bird sightings into eBird or another bird logging software.

Breeding Bird Codes and comments can be added easily. You can create checklists offline when you are out of cell phone coverage and upload them later.

The ease of use has increased the number and quality of bird data on eBird. A few other features make this a handy app to have, including a "Calculate" button that captures the amount of time used for creating a checklist.

An especially nice set of features allow you to find, create, and map birding hotspots. Nearby hotspots can be found in the field. Hotspots can be searched by city. Personal hotspot locations can be created. You can use locations on a map to find hotspots.

Get the mobile app by visiting the app store that is appropriate for your smartphone.

Preview for next month: Use eBird to find species in a location.

It's DFO membership renewal time

by Mary Cay Burger

It is that time of year again! All DFO memberships expire on December 31, so put renewing your membership on your to-do list. You can print the membership form from this newsletter and mail it in, or you can [renew online](#). A Membership bought today will pay for the remainder of 2017 and all of 2018.

Membership fees are modest and help DFO carry out its mission to promote the study and preservation of birds and their habitats.

Your dues make it possible for DFO to have a website, publish the *Lark Bunting*, and bring in excellent speakers for our monthly programs. With your support DFO can continue to offer monthly programs and fieldtrips at no charge.

As we enter the season of gift giving, consider purchasing a membership in DFO. It is a great way to give someone a lasting gift. You may also gift another person with a membership renewal. You can find gift membership information on our [website](#). Thanks for your past support and thanks in advance for renewing your membership for 2018.

Thank you for your contribution to our Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Karen Bickett, Robert Righter, Denise and Danny Smith.

Big Year 2018: preparing to fly

by David Suddjian

DFOs Big Year 2018 is about to take flight. Wonderful field trips are the hallmark of DFO and our Big Year 2018 will be centered on these trips.

We will seek to find as many species as we can in all of Colorado—*only counting those species detected on planned DFO field trips*.

Field trip leaders will meet in mid-November to chart out ideas for trips for each month. You can expect to see a new array of trips going farther afield, including some overnight adventures.

In 2018, we expect to find many species never before recorded on DFO field trips and to offer trips to find many of the state's specialties.

A Big Year presents many challenges: careful planning, unpredictable weather that impacts trips and may affect habitat availability, annual variation in the quality of spring and fall migration, and quickly responding to spot those unpredictable rarities.

The challenge of a Big Year is made more challenging by limiting our effort only to planned field trips. All the factors listed above will be at play.

The January *Lark Bunting* will present details of our strategy and highlight some of the special birds we will be seeking.

The success of our Big Year will depend on the birders who come out on the field trips to find and enjoy the birds.

If you seldom join a DFO field

trip, Big Year 2018 is a great time to become more involved. If you are a regular field trip participant, watch for opportunities in 2018 to visit new birding places and to seek Colorado birds you have not seen before.

How will you measure up against DFO in 2018? You might set a personal challenge, like:

- Who will attend the most DFO field trips in 2018?
- Who will lead the most trips?
- How many species will you see on DFO trips?
- Will your personal year list top DFOs tally?

Big Year 2018 will be great fun, and a unique opportunity to see more and enjoy the camaraderie of DFO spiced by the challenge. Don't miss out!

Research, education and conservation grants solicitation open

The DFO Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund is now accepting applications for grants to encourage the study, appreciation, and preservation of birds and their habitats.

Preference will be given to projects in the Denver metropolitan area, the Front Range, the state of Colorado, and the USA, in that order.

Awards typically range from \$500 to \$2000. Recent awards have included grants to fund student scholarships to local birding camps, and support research on McCown's Longspur, Clark's Nutcracker, and Flammulated Owls.

Proposals should include a description of the goals, a methodology, a complete budget that includes other funding sources, and an indication of any completed preliminary work.

It is expected that successful grantees will provide a report on their project to be published in the *Lark Bunting* newsletter and on the DFO website.

Alternatively, researchers can lead a trip to their research site or make

a presentation at the monthly DFO meeting.

An application form and history of past awards are available on the website. Deadline for applications is February 1, 2018. Notification of awards will be made later in February.



White-crowned Sparrow. Sharon Tinianow

Last Month's Program: Coffee

Tim Johnson

On October 23rd, Colorado native Gemara Gifford presented, "Coffee for Communities and Conservation." You can see a video of her presentation [here](#).

Gifford began with an overview of worldwide coffee production. Around the world, about 30,000 square miles (approximately 1/3 the area of Colorado) are devoted to coffee production; about half of this is in Brazil, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Roughly 10% of the world's coffee comes from Central America and coffee all over the world is grown mostly on small holdings of less than about 12 acres.

Planting, harvesting, and the initial stages of processing beans are usually done by the farmers themselves, but they get only 5-10% of the ultimate retail value.

Gifford underscored the importance of coffee plantations for conservation with maps comparing world areas of high biodiversity with areas of coffee production. They overlap a great deal.

Coffee traditionally is grown under a canopy of trees, either local forest or agroforest. An example of an agroforest in Central America is a tree plantation, such as teak or cacao.

A major concern for conservationists is the accelerating trend to convert shade-grown coffee farms to crops grown in full sun using hybrid coffees that generate high yields, are sun tolerant, and give farmers more cash up front.

These plantations, however, need to be replaced more often and tend

to need higher inputs of water, fertilizer, and pesticides than shade-grown coffee.

They also require removal of the forest cover, which increases erosion and negatively impacts other crops, as well as bird and animal species.

Sun coffee can be less resilient to disease, which may have contributed to the catastrophic coffee leaf rust epidemic of 2012-2013, which destroyed 60-70% of Central America's coffee crop.

Thus, for a biologist, addressing coffee farming is a complicated story requiring interactions with farmers and their communities, as well as meaningful data evaluating the real impact of such farming on the local ecology.

Gifford presented data concerning the aspects of a forest that might most influence bird diversity. She looked at neotropical migrants and residents and, for some residents, she evaluated breeding and non-breeding members.

She presented striking graphs relating the likelihood that a bird would use a given area with the amount of forest cover in the area.

The best predictor for usage by both migrants and residents was the amount of canopy cover.

Tree density and the presence of epiphytes (plants that are supported by other plants and derive their nutrients and water from rain and air) were also important.

Migrants appeared to need less complex habitat than permanent residents.

The practical lessons for bird

conservation in Central America from Gifford's work include these messages:

1. Forest requirements for migrant and resident species are different.
2. Migrant birds require a habitat with a forest canopy area of 20% or greater.
3. Tree density should be maintained at 150-550 trees/hectare.
4. Resident birds require a habitat with a forest canopy of 25-40% or greater.
5. Epiphytes should be protected.

Gifford discussed the confusing certification process for coffee, noting that a buyer considering different types of certification is choosing what to protect.

Smithsonian-certified Bird Friendly coffee, for example, emphasizes environmental standards without consideration of farmers, while Fair Trade certification could ignore any ecological considerations.

Her reluctant favorite among certifications was [Rainforest Alliance](#), which includes consideration of habitat and people. Rainforest Alliance certified products feature a distinctive green frog logo.

But she would like to see the industry move away from certification toward what she called "relationship coffee".

This term would describe cooperation between coffee-growing communities and companies to improve conservation and agricultural practices in the process of producing coffee.

Continued on page 7

Gemara Gifford has a degree in Zoology from Colorado State University and recently received an MS from Cornell University.

She is currently the Director of Development and Biodiversity at Trees, Water and People (TWP), an NGO based in Fort Collins. TWP (www.treeswaterpeople.org) works in Central America on the interconnected issues of poverty, agriculture, deforestation, and conservation.

Gifford concluded by describing TWP's recent work in Honduras,

in cooperation with the Center for Education in Sustainable Agriculture, in communities near the poorly-known Montecillos Reserve.

Here, TWP is engaging in agroforestry education projects, establishing community-operated tree nurseries, helping with farm crop diversification, and setting up processes for bird monitoring—a new project.

TWP also helps these communities upgrade inefficient wood-

burning cooking stoves in an effort to reduce deforestation and improve health, an effort they share with many other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Central America.

A succinct summary of Gifford's outlook and the work of TWP is the title of Chapter 3 of her thesis: "Biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods in agroecosystems".

(Her thesis contains much fascinating material and can be found at <https://ecommons.cornell.edu>).



Megan, Francis and Jeanette – Get ready for Christmas Bird Count! *Joey Kellner*

64th Denver Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, December 16, 2017

by *Joey Kellner*

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the annual Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Here is how it works:

- The 15-mile diameter “count circle” is subdivided into 24 “count areas” each with a leader.
- Area locations and names and phone numbers of Area Leaders are listed below.
- Participants should contact Area Leaders (see below) for count day meeting times and places.
- Or, call the Count Compiler (see below) if you would like to help in an area that still needs additional observers.
- NOTE: Two areas still need a leader/leader duo – If interested PLEASE contact the Compiler.
- Fee: None! So, no excuses! Come have a great time and help count birds! Beginners and experts all welcome!

POTLUCK! After a day in the field, all participants are invited to attend the compilation meeting/potluck to feast, warm up, chat with other birders, and find out how the count fared. It is a lot of fun. The compilation meeting will start at approximately 5pm at Chatfield State Park Headquarters, located on the south side of the lake near the Heronry Overlook. A State Parks vehicle entry pass required, so please carpool if possible. Ask your Area Leader about reimbursement if that is an issue.

Feel free to bring a dish or dessert to share! Cheryl Teuton (contact information below) will coordinate the potluck. Please contact her if you plan to bring a dish to share.

Count Leader/Compiler: Joey Kellner (303-978-1748), vireo1@comcast.net

Feeder Coordinator: Bob Shade (303-975-2476), wrshade3@gmail.com

Potluck Coordinator: Cheryl Teuton (303-912-3341)

Area Number and Location	Area Leader	Phone Number
1. Red Rocks Park	Dan String	720-854-5911
2. Lower Bear Creek	Michael Kiessig	303-909-5169
2A. Bear Creek Lake Park	Mark Amershek	303-329-8646
3. Bow Mar/Marston	Bill Hopping	303-809-3053
4A. Lower South Platte - East	Ed Holub	303-979-2194
4B. Lower South Platte - West	Dick Schottler	303-278-8035
5. Highline Ditch	Nancy Crews	303-842-2833
6. Plum Creek	Norm Erthal	303-917-2596
7A. Middle South Platte - West	Charlie Lawrence	303-795-9126
7B. Middle South Platte - East	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
8. Chatfield State Park	Joey Kellner	303-978-1748
9. Upper South Platte *	Jill Holden	720-288-4018
10. Lower Deer Creek (Chatfield Arboretum)	Riley & Heather Morris	720-666-1644
11. Upper Deer Creek	Paul Slingsby	720-347-5169
12. Yegge Peak	Ann Bonnell	303-979-6211
13. Doublehead Mountain	Amy Davis	303-549-7759
14. North Turkey Creek	Ed Furlong	303-956-8321
15. Indian Hills	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217
16. Upper Bear Creek	Laura Steadman	843-319-5086
17. Ken Caryl Ranch	Tom Bush	303-919-5040
18. Garrison Gate	Leader needed	
19. Morrison/Willowbrook	Leader needed	
20. Willow Creek	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
21. Mount Lindo/Willow Springs	Bob Shade	303-975-2476

* to participate in this area, you must contact the area leader no later than Monday, December 12th.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
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Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director	Will Burt	willburt43@gmail.com
Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held fourth Monday of each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

DFO logo by Radeaux

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [*.jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome to new DFO members: Karen Bickett, Denver; Larry Bradburn, Thornton; Zoe Erkenbeck, Littleton; Piming Kuo, Englewood; Weston Petty, Lakewood; Peter Stoltz, Denver; Lindsey Stone and Mikel Stone, Denver; Michael Valenta and Holly Valenta, Lafayette; Jan Wilson—Denver

Upcoming Speakers

Max Ciaglio

Report on Flammulated

Owl Research

Nov. 27

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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|---|----------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 40 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

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